Netcat in the Hat

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Greetings again, challenge fans! For this month's challenge, Tom Liston has whipped up a delightful doozy, this time all in rhyme. This one is a lot of fun, and will give you a chance to play around with everyone's favorite feline, Netcat! Carefully read the challenge, and submit your answers to the four questions at the end to skillz0906@ethicalhacker.net with the Subject: Skillz Submission by September 30, 2006. Tom will pick three winners using our standard formula: one for the best technical answer, one for the most creative answer, and one winner drawn at random. If your elite skillz are up to the challenge, by all means please dazzle us with your dynamism. But, even if you cannot answer all of the questions, or only have guesses for them, send in your ideas... you'll still have a shot at being the random winner. Tom and myself will autograph and send copies of our book, Counter Hack Reloaded, to each of the winners. Have fun with Netcat in the Hat, dear readers--

-- Ed Skoudis, Intelguardians

Skillz Sponsored by Core Security Technologies
Netcat in the Hat

The data stood still,

And the packets did stay

Sitting there in the N.O.C.

All that cold, cold wet day.

Our connection went down

When the phone lines were cut

By some dude with a backhoe,

Gold tooth and beer gut.

Far worse was that we

Quite nearly were through

With a large data transfer

Straight from Kalamazoo

Only three-point-nine gigs

Of that data-filled file

That should be four-one

If our boss was to smile.

But with no packet flow

And the weekend quite near

“No rest for the weary,”

Was our greatest fear.

But all we could do was to

Sit!

Sit!

Sit!

Sit!

And we did not like it

Not one little bit.

And then

Something went BUMP!

How that bump made us jump!

We looked!

Then we saw him step onto the mat*

We looked!

And we saw him!

Netcat in the Hat!

And he said to us

“Why do you sit there like that?”

“Sure, the network is down

And the phones are all crap

But the tenants upstairs

Have an unsecured WAP.”

“I know some good games we could play,”

Said the cat.

“I know some new tricks.”

Said Netcat in the Hat.

“A lot of good tricks.

I will show them to you.

Your manager

Won’t mind at all if I do.”

“Do not listen to him!

Don’t learn his bad knowledge!”

Said Manish, the intern

From community college.

“Tell Netcat in the Hat

You do NOT want to play.

The Manager’s out,

Make that cat go away!

He should not be here.

He should not be about.

He should not be here

When the manager’s out!”

“Now! Now! Have no fear.

Have no fear!” said the cat.

“My tricks are not bad,”

Said Netcat in the Hat.

“Why we can have

Lots of good fun, if you wish,

With a game that I call

Blame it all on Manish”

“Don’t do that!” said Manish

“That is no fun at all!”

“Don’t do that!” said Manish

“Don’t make me take the fall!”

“Then be quiet

And sit” we heard the Cat say.

“I have an idea that

Just might save the day.”

*Anti-static, of course...

“But that wireless lan is

Quite pokey and slow”

Said Manish who then added

“I’ve HEARD that it’s so…”

“That file is big

and we only got part

And the FTP server

does not do ‘restart’.

Even if you can get on that wireless site

A file that big will take most of the night!”

“Did I not say

That I had it planned?”

Said the Cat, with a dismissive

Wave of his hand.

And then he ran out.

And, then, fast as a fox

NetCat in the Hat

Came back in with a box

A skinny black box,

That was shut with a clasp.

When he set it down

I could hear Manish gasp.

“Oh no, you bad Cat!

I do not like this game!

That’s a Dell-branded laptop!

It could burst into flame!”

NetCat paid no attention

Though the laptop was “Delled”

And though we jumped back,

The Battery held.

“On this box are two things

I will show to you now.

You will like these two things,”

Said NetCat with a bow.

“I will unclasp the clasp

You will see something new.

Two things. And I call them

Thing One and Thing Two.”

“These things, they will help you

They want to be run!”

And there on the screen

Was Thing Two and Thing One.

NetCat was quite clever

He did some quick math

Then he typed a command

And he gave a quick laugh.

“Thing One is quite handy,

Of that, there’s no doubt!

But Thing Two’s just amazing!”

He proclaimed with a shout

“Dear Thing Two could

Do nothing… he’d wait till the end…

Desperate for, if you would,

Data from his dear friend”

“Each one is a treasure.

No doubt that is true,

But together there’s nothing

That they cannot do!”

“Thing One knows the “if”

And I told him the “of”

And he fits with Thing Two

Like a well-fitted glove”

“So, your file will be fixed,

Quite soon even though

Your link to the net is incredibly slow.”

Said the Cat as he packed

Up and started to go.

And then he was gone

With a tip of his Hat

But we’d never forget what

We learned from that Cat.

The Problem:

All of the data needed to run the weekly TPS report is in a file called TPSDATA090106.zip found on the machine horton.whoville.net. The file is 4,427,036,672 (~4.1GB) bytes long, but unfortunately you've only been able to FTP 4,212,288,512 (~3.9GB) bytes back to your machine, lumbergh.initech.com, before the ‘net went down. You're only able to transfer data over a somewhat slow, "borrowed" wireless link. You have SSH access to horton.whoville.com. What will you do?

The Questions:

1) What program is "Thing One"?

2) What program is "Thing Two"?

3) What was the command that The NetCat in the Hat used?

4) What could you do if, instead of being 4,212,288,512 bytes, the file you were able to FTP was actually 4,212,288,525 bytes? (a hint: you might need to call in "Thing Three")

For more information on Netcat, the swiss army knife of tools, see below:

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Search our forums for Netcat

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See 'Related Forum Topics' on the right side menu

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Official Netcat Site

Remember, please submit your answers to skillz0906@ethicalhacker.net with the Subject: Skillz Submission by Sept 30, 2006. In early October, we’ll announce three winners, one from each of these categories:

- Best technical answer
- Most creative and technically correct answer
- Random draw from all answers submitted, correct, incorrect, complete, partially complete, etc.

Each winner gets a copy of Counter Hack Reloaded, autographed by authors Ed Skoudis and Tom Liston, congratulating you on your victory and amazing abilities!