HermeticWiper

Technical Analysis Report

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Overview

As the tension that started between Russia and Ukraine on February 24 turned into a physical conflict, at the same time, cyber-attacks and malware threats came to the fore. Researchers had found that Russian threat actors developed malware that corrupts MBR (Master Boot Record) and disk volumes for Ukrainian organizations.

First, security researchers from ESET and Symantec detected this type of malware. We then analyzed the sample, making sense of it with various IoC findings. As a result, security providers have named this example HermeticWiper.
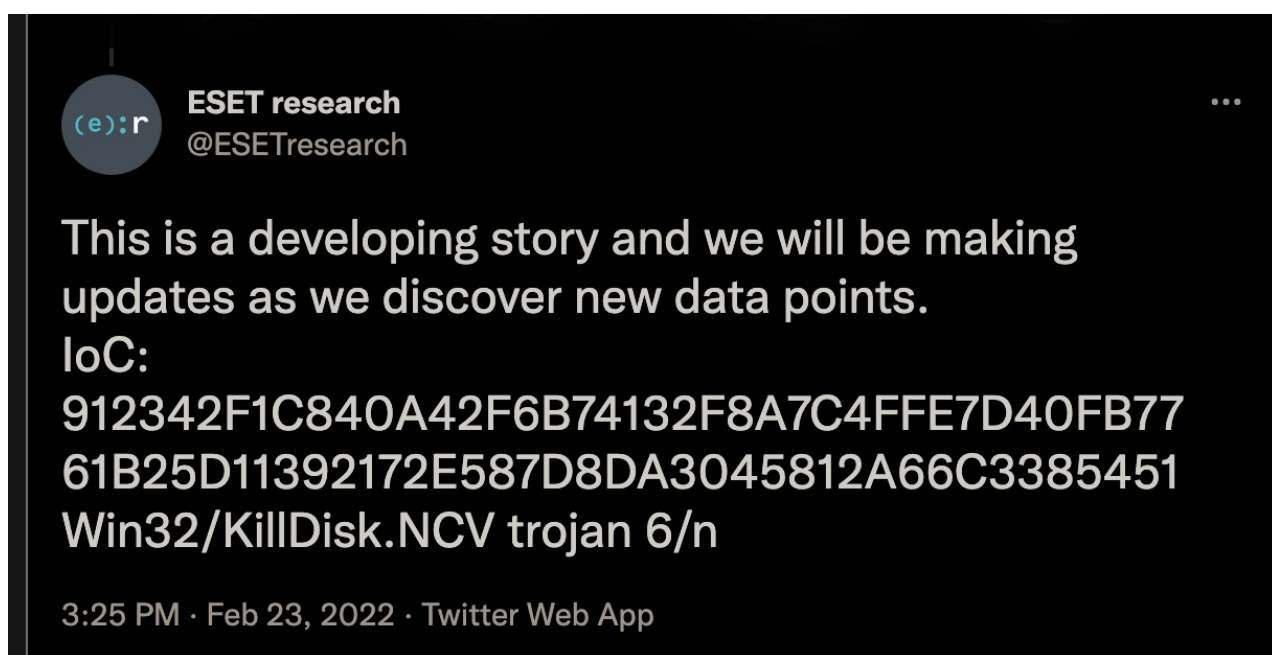

ESET research
@ESETresearch

This is a developing story and we will be making updates as we discover new data points.
IoC:
912342F1C840A42F6B74132F8A7C4FFE7D40FB77
61B25D11392172E587D8DA3045812A66C3385451
Win32/KillDisk.NCV trojan 6/n

3:25 PM · Feb 23, 2022 · Twitter Web App

Figure 1: On February 23, IoCs which have shared by ESET

The malware was detected on thousands of different devices in Ukraine and tagged as KillDisk.NCV. It is named HermeticWiper because of the digital certificate the malware holds. The certificate, issued with Hermetica Digital Ltd, is valid from 2021.

Researchers state they can obtain the certificate by using it on behalf of a front company or confiscating a closed company. However, security researchers have noticed that malware signed with this certificate is no longer seen.
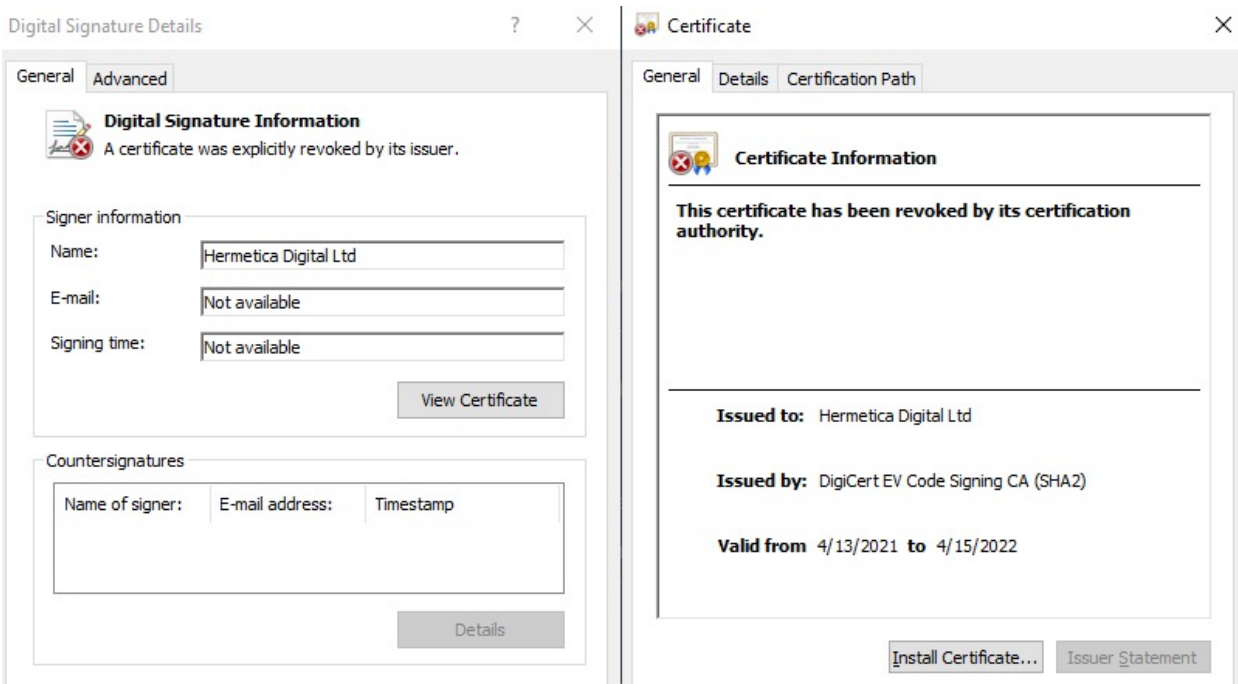
Figure 2: HermeticWiper Software Signed with Hermetica Digital Ltd Certificate

HermeticWiper Technical Analysis

The HermeticWiper malware, the subject of the report, was examined on the Windows 10 64-bit operating system. Additional source files used by HermeticWiper vary according to the target operating system.

SHA256	1bc44eef75779e3ca1eefb8ff5a64807dbc942b1e4a2672d77b9f6928d292591
SSDEEP	1536:sBOoa7Nn52wurilmw9BgjKu1sPPxaSLyqC:sBOoa7P2wxlPwV1qPkSuqC
File Type	Win32 EXE

Payloads Used

HermeticWiper has four different payloads designed for x64 and x86 architectures according to the operating systems it targets in the .rsrc section called RCDATA. DRV_X64 (64-bit) and DRV_X86 (32-bit) are used for Vista and later operating systems, while the remaining two payloads, DRV_XP_X64 and DRV_XP_X86, are also used for XP operating system.
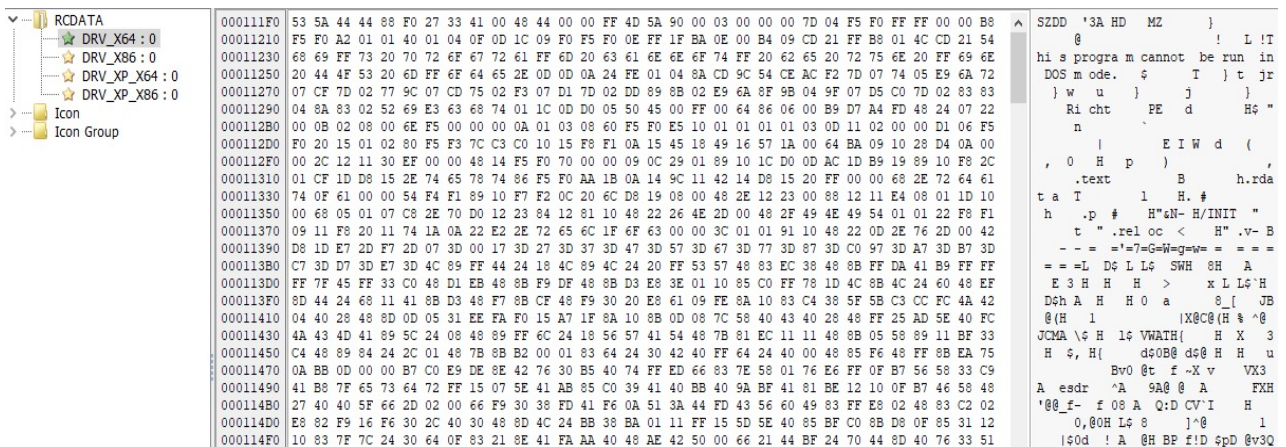
Figure 3: Additional resources embedded in HermeticWiper software

These files are hosted as compressed data and are extracted from the archive by the "LZ" functions (LzOpenFileW, LZClose, LZCopy).

File System Change

HermeticWiper determines which of the additional resources it will use, kept in compressed form, by checking the operating system version it is working on. Malware authors have designed to run on Vista and higher operating systems the 64-bit and 32-bit versions of the payloads and contain additional embedded files for the XP operating system.
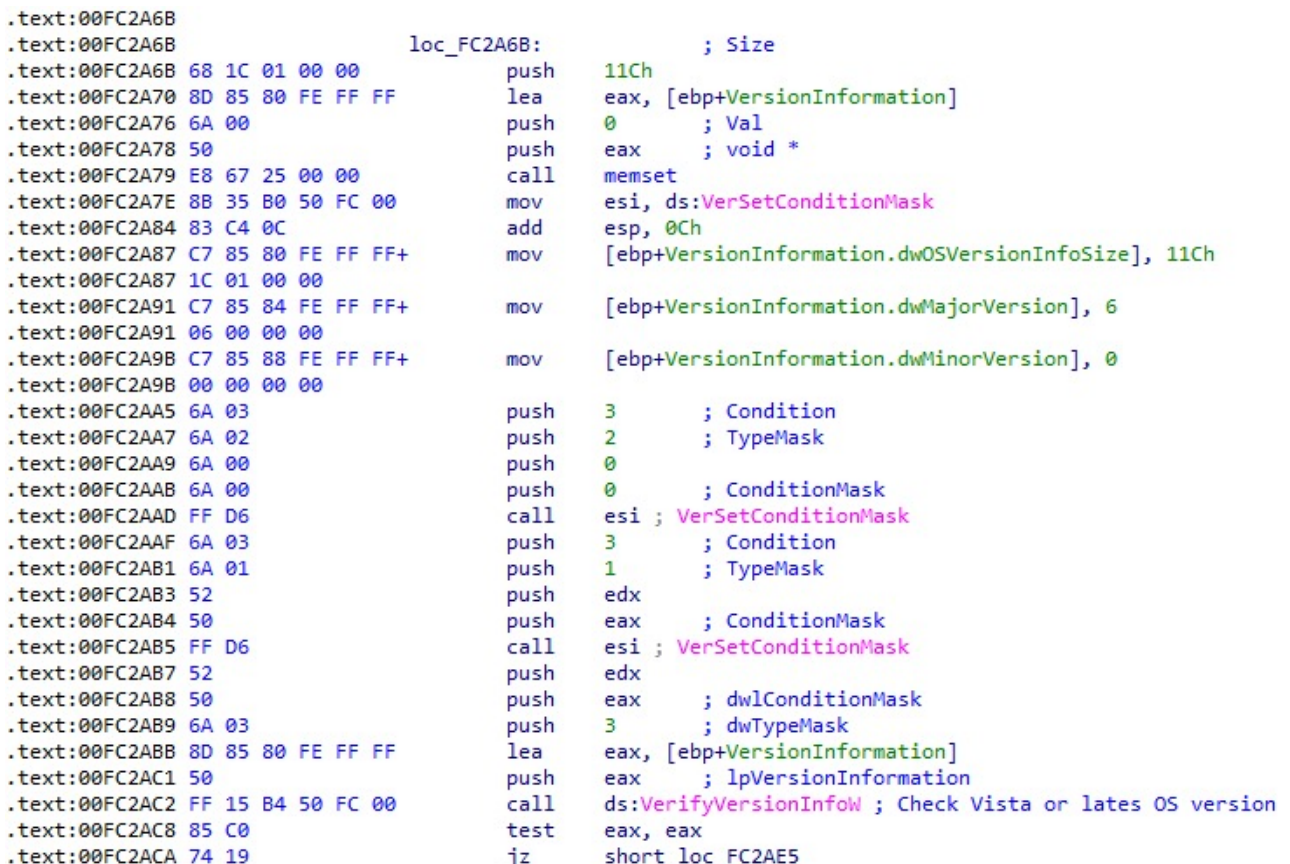

Figure 4: Hermeticwiper OS Version Control

Figure 5: Payload selection by operating system version

HermeticWiper uses embedded resources as driver files. After HermeticWiper is determined the source to use, it creates a random four-character file with no extension in the C:\Windows\System32\drivers directory. The file created in the directory is named differently each time the program runs, but the name length remains constant (4 characters). The file's content is the same as the data in the source part of the program (RCDATA). In other words, the payload is copied to this directory in an archived form.

Figure 6: Copying the archived source file to C:\windows\system32\drivers without extension

The image above shows the file named "jldr" that had dropped in the target directory and the file content.

The compressed driver file (without the .sys extension) left in the C:\Windows\System32\drivers directory is extracted from the archive and deleted after the final driver file is created (by adding the .sys extension).
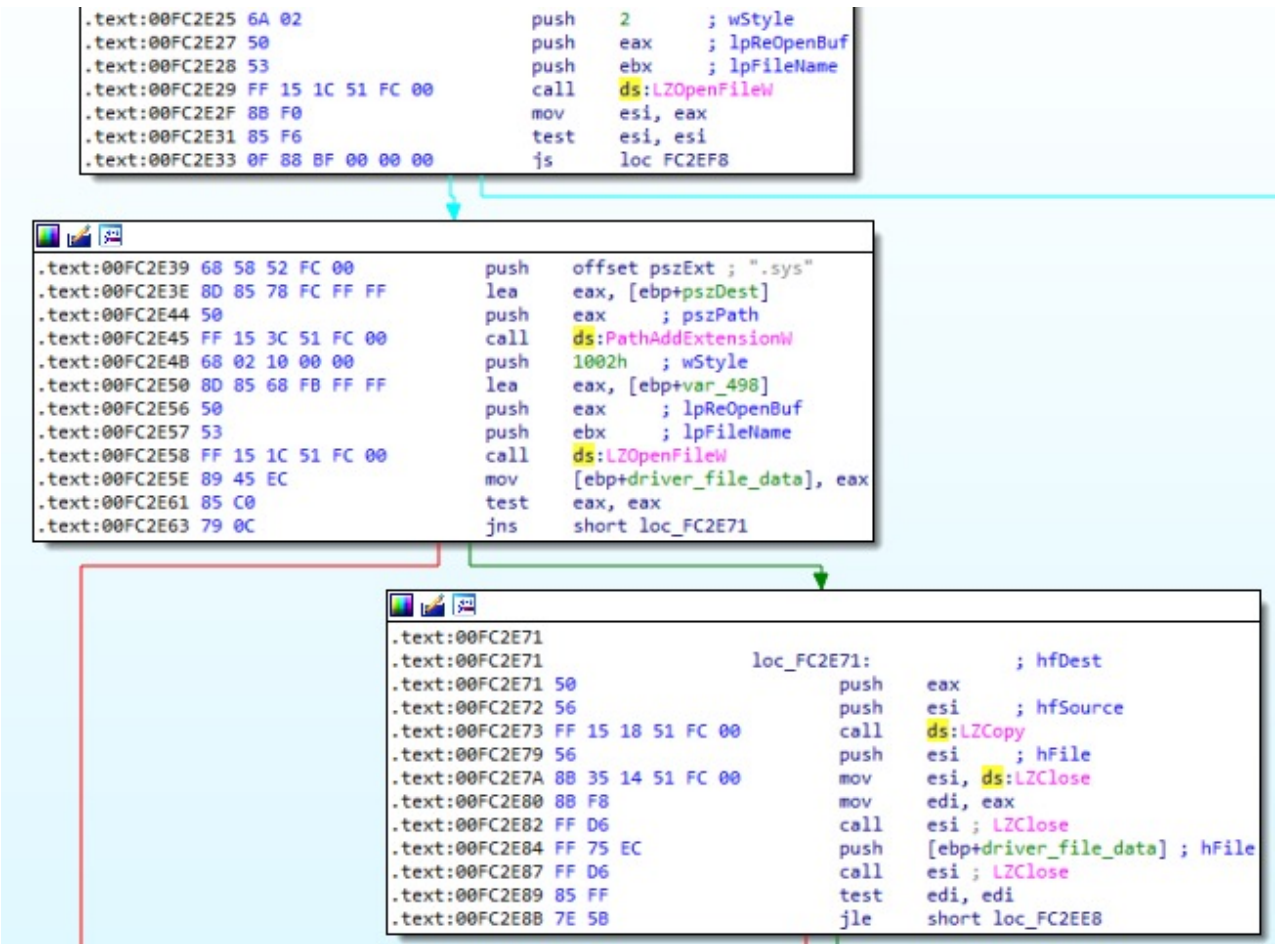
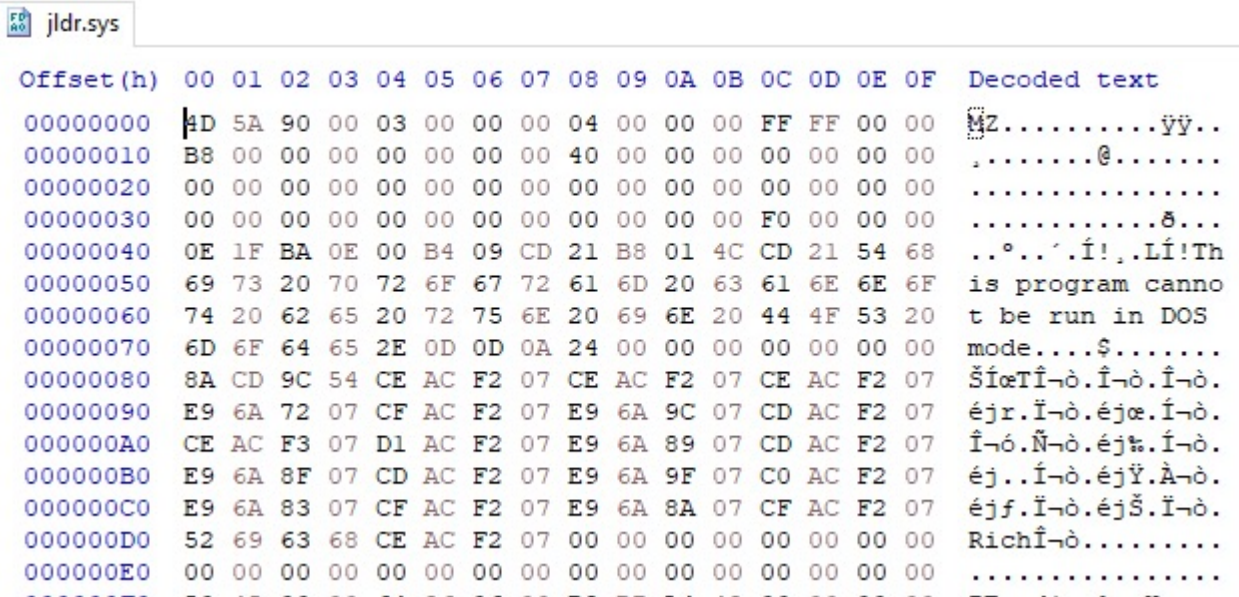**Figure 7**: Extracting the compressed file with the help of LZ functions create driver file

Figure 8: Actual content of the additional source file extracted from the archive

Service Creation

After creating the driver file, HermeticWiper starts the service creation process by calling the OpenSCManager API function.

First, the malware checks whether there is an existing service through the driver file created. If there is no service available, the binary file with the same name as the file name is created as a service.

Figure 9: Using the extracted file as a driver service

This service is created with SERVICE_ALL_ACCESS (0xF01FF) access rights indicating full access rights and has the following attributes:

- SERVICE_KERNEL_DRIVER: Installed as a driver service

- SERVICE_DEMAND_START: HermeticWiper sets the service to be started by the Service Control Manager when a process calls the StartService function.

Service Configuration Change

After the driver service is created, it opens the connection to the VSS service. VSS (Volume Shadow Copy) is used in Microsoft Windows to make backups and consistent point-in-time data copies. This service has access rights SERVICE_CHANGE_CONFIG (0X0002) to change the service configuration settings and SERVICE_STOP (0x0020) to stop the service.

Figure 10: VSS service configuration change

HermeticWiper tries to affect the functionality of the VSS service by changing its configuration parameters. The change can be explained as follows:

* HermeticWiper has changed the start type of the service to SERVICE_DISABLED. This status means that the VSS service cannot be started/disabled. This change ensures the defender cannot perform data recovery or system restoration operations. After the service configuration change is complete, the control code SERVICE_CONTROL_STOP (0x00000001) is sent to the VSS service using the ControlService API function to stop working.

Figure 11: Stopping VSS service with Controlservice function call

Registry Change

HermeticWiper performs several different registry changes. We have explained these changes in detail below.

- With the creation of the driver service mentioned earlier, information about the driver service is saved in the **HKLM\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services** registry key, but HermeticWiper deletes this registry key. We consider this behavior to be a privacy effort.

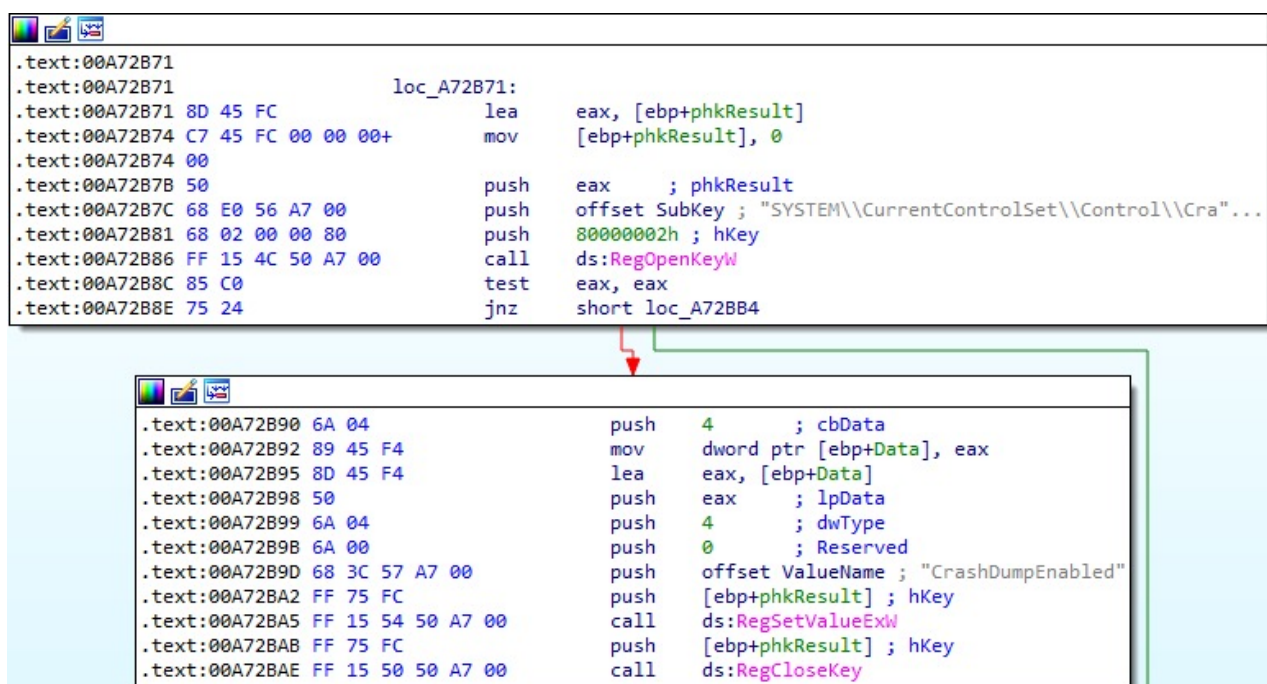| Name	Type	Data
(Default)	REG_SZ	(value not set)
DisplayName	REG_SZ	jldr
ErrorControl	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)
ImagePath	REG_EXPAND_SZ	\??\C:\Windows\system32\Drivers\jldr.sys
Start	REG_DWORD	0x00000003 (3)
Type	REG_DWORD	0x00000001 (1)

Figure 12: Generated registry information associated with the driver service

```
.text:00332EB5 8D 85 60 F9 FF FF        lea     eax, [ebp+Destination]
.text:00332EBB 50                       push    eax
.text:00332EBC 68 20 54 33 00           push    offset aSystemCurrentc_0 ; "SYSTEM\\CurrentControlSet\\services\\"
.text:00332EC1 8D 85 58 F7 FF FF        lea     eax, [ebp+SubKey]
.text:00332EC7 68 68 54 33 00           push    offset aSS ; "%s%s"
.text:00332ECC 50                       push    eax      ; LPWSTR
.text:00332ECD FF 15 68 51 33 00        call    ds:wsprintfW
.text:00332ED3 83 C4 10                 add     esp, 10h
.text:00332ED6 8D 85 58 F7 FF FF        lea     eax, [ebp+SubKey]
.text:00332EDC 50                       push    eax      ; lpSubKey
.text:00332EDD 68 02 00 00 80           push    80000002h ; hKey
.text:00332EE2 FF 15 34 50 33 00        call    ds:RegDeleteKeyW
```

Figure 13: Deleting the registry key associated with the driver service

HermeticWiper changes the default value of the **CrashDumpEnabled** subkey (7) to 0 in the registry path **SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\CrashControl**. The threat actor does this to block functionality that can prevent data recovery and automatically dump memory in the event of a system crash.

According to Microsoft, the CrashDumpEnabled key is set to 7 to allow the Automatic Memory Dump feature, while it is set to 0 to disable this feature.

Figure 14: Setting the Crash Dump Enabled registry key

File Privilege Change

The HermeticWiper file uses the privilege (authorization) constants described below to provide the necessary rights for the operations it will perform. These are:

• **SeBackupPrivilege**
Enabling this feature means the relevant process is excluded from ACL (Access-control list) control. In this way, it can access each file's contents, even if the necessary access permission does not provide.

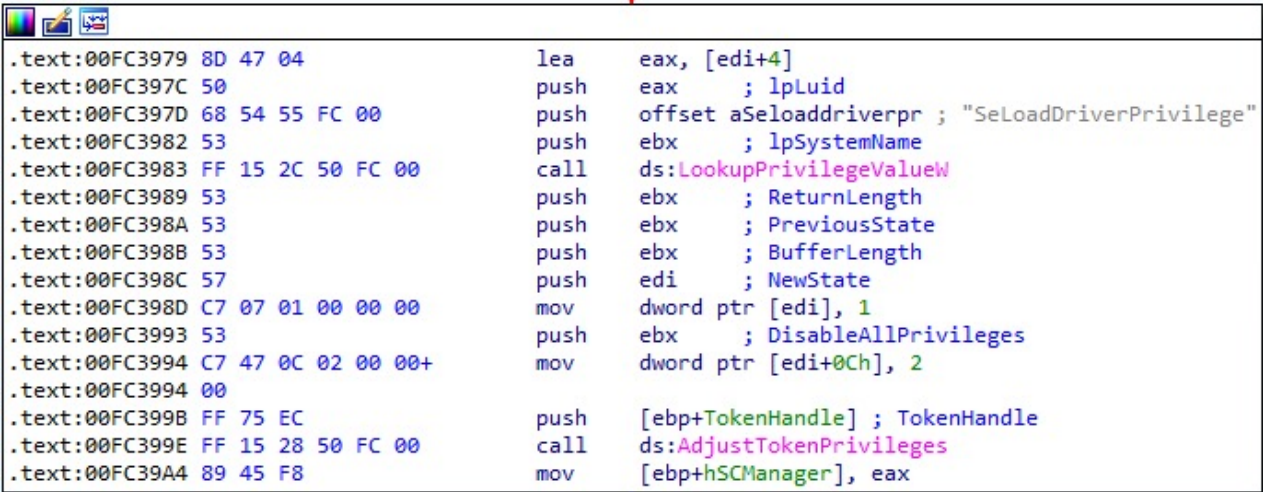**Figure 15**: Setting the SeBackupPrivilege privilege constant

- **SeShutdownPrivilege**

The user or process with this privilege has the right to shut down the system.

- **SeLoadDriverPrivilege**

Defines the user permission required to install and uninstall the device driver.
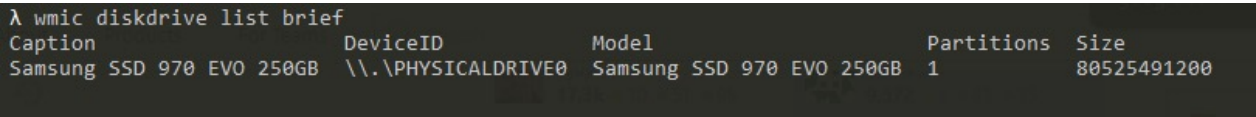


```
.text:00FC3979 8D 47 04          lea     eax, [edi+4]
.text:00FC397C 50                push    eax      ; lpLuid
.text:00FC397D 68 54 55 FC 00     push    offset aSeloaddriverpr ; "SeLoadDriverPrivilege"
.text:00FC3982 53                push    ebx      ; lpSystemName
.text:00FC3983 FF 15 2C 50 FC 00  call    ds:LookupPrivilegeValueW
.text:00FC3989 53                push    ebx      ; ReturnLength
.text:00FC398A 53                push    ebx      ; PreviousState
.text:00FC398B 53                push    ebx      ; BufferLength
.text:00FC398C 57                push    edi      ; NewState
.text:00FC398D C7 07 01 00 00 00  mov     dword ptr [edi], 1
.text:00FC3993 53                push    ebx      ; DisableAllPrivileges
.text:00FC3994 C7 47 0C 02 00 00+ mov     dword ptr [edi+0Ch], 2
.text:00FC3994 00
.text:00FC399B FF 75 EC          push    [ebp+TokenHandle] ; TokenHandle
.text:00FC399E FF 15 28 50 FC 00  call    ds:AdjustTokenPrivileges
.text:00FC39A4 89 45 F8          mov     [ebp+hSCManager], eax
```

Figure 16: Setting the SeLoadDriverPrivilege privilege constant

Harddisk Discovery
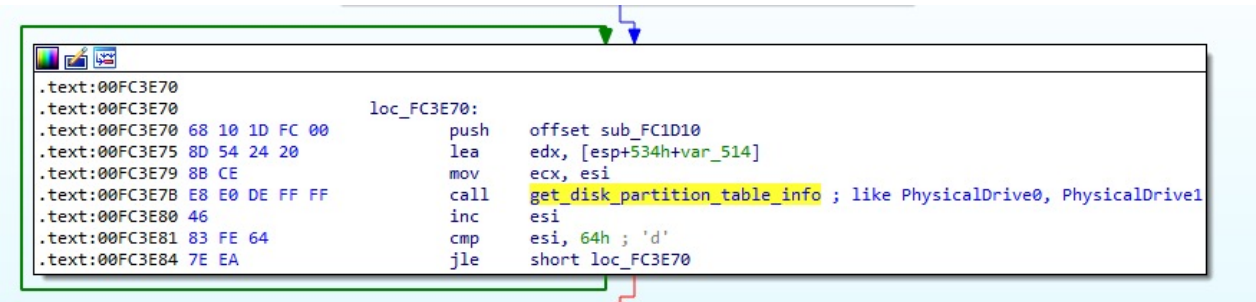
HermeticWiper tries to detect the hard disks connected to the target computer. For this, it tries to detect physical disks using the expression **\\\\.\\PhysicalDrive\\%u**. For example:


```
λ wmic diskdrive list brief
Caption                 DeviceID              Model                      Partitions  Size
Samsung SSD 970 EVO 250GB  \\.\PHYSICALDRIVE0  Samsung SSD 970 EVO 250GB  1           80525491200
```

Figure 17: Detection of physical disks connected to the computer

PhysicalDrive0, PhysicalDrive1, etc., each of the expressions represent a physical hard disk. The HermeticWiper makes queries to detect the connected disks from 0 to 100 (PhysicalDrive0, PhysicalDrive1, PhysicalDrive2, etc.).


```
.text:00FC3E70
.text:00FC3E70              loc_FC3E70:
.text:00FC3E70 68 10 1D FC 00        push    offset sub_FC1D10
.text:00FC3E75 8D 54 24 20           lea     edx, [esp+534h+var_514]
.text:00FC3E79 8B CE                 mov     ecx, esi
.text:00FC3E7B E8 E0 DE FF FF        call    get_disk_partition_table_info ; like PhysicalDrive0, PhysicalDrive1
.text:00FC3E80 46                    inc     esi
.text:00FC3E81 83 FE 64              cmp     esi, 64h ; 'd'
.text:00FC3E84 7E EA                 jle     short loc_FC3E70
```

Figure 18: Detecting physical disks

Additionally, it obtains the physical location of a specified volume on one or more disks. When searching for files/directories critical to the target system, it calls the DeviceIoControl API function using the IoControlCode value 0x560000.


```
.text:00FC2087 68 80 00 00 00          push      80h        ; dwBytes
.text:00FC208C 6A 08                   push      8          ; dwFlags
.text:00FC208E 89 7C 24 38             mov       [esp+250h+BytesReturned], edi
.text:00FC2092 FF 15 60 50 FC 00       call      ds:GetProcessHeap
.text:00FC2098 50                      push      eax        ; hHeap
.text:00FC2099 FF 15 5C 50 FC 00       call      ds:HeapAlloc
.text:00FC209F 6A 00                   push      0          ; lpOverlapped
.text:00FC20A1 8B F0                   mov       esi, eax
.text:00FC20A3 8D 44 24 34             lea       eax, [esp+24Ch+BytesReturned]
.text:00FC20A7 50                      push      eax        ; lpBytesReturned
.text:00FC20A8 68 80 00 00 00          push      80h        ; nOutBufferSize
.text:00FC20AD 56                      push      esi        ; lpOutBuffer
.text:00FC20AE 6A 00                   push      0          ; nInBufferSize
.text:00FC20B0 6A 00                   push      0          ; lpInBuffer
.text:00FC20B2 68 00 00 56 00          push      560000h    ; dwIoControlCode
.text:00FC20B7 53                      push      ebx        ; hDevice
.text:00FC20B8 89 74 24 54             mov       [esp+268h+var_214], esi
.text:00FC20BC FF 15 64 50 FC 00       call      ds:DeviceIoControl
.text:00FC20C2 85 C0                   test      eax, eax
.text:00FC20C4 0F 84 9A 01 00 00       jz        loc_FC2264
```

Figure 19: Call used to get information about disk volumes

Other IoControlCode values and identifiers detected used by HermeticWiper at runtime are listed below:

- 0x9006F - FSCTL_GET_VOLUME_BITMAP
- 0x2d1080 - IOCTL_STORAGE_GET_DEVICE_NUMBER
- 0x700A0 - IOCTL_DISK_GET_DRIVE_GEOMETRY_EX
- 0x70050 - IOCTL_DISK_GET_DRIVE_LAYOUT_EX
- 0x56000 - IOCTL_VOLUME_GET_VOLUME_DISK_EXTENTS
- 0x90018 - IOCTL_LOCK_VOLUME
- 0x90020 - FSCTL_DISMOUNT_VOLUME
- 0x90073 - FSCTL_GET_RETRIEVAL_POINTERS
- 0x90074 - FSCTL_MOVE_FILE
- 0x90068 - FSCTL_GET_NTFS_FILE_RECORD
- 0x90064 - FSCTL_GET_NTFS_VOLUME_DATA

After detecting all storage devices connected to the computer, specific directories are searched with some attributes of the NTFS file system.

We have mentioned these directories and attributes on the next page.

Directories

C:\System Volume Information\
C:\Documents and Settings\
C:\Windows\System32\winevt\Logs
C:\Windows\SYSVOL
C:\Users\%USERNAME%\AppData
C:\Users\Default\My Documents
C:\Users\%USERNAME%\Desktop

NTFS File System Attributes

$Bitmap
$INDEX_ALLOCATION
$Logfile

In addition to the above-mentioned NTFS file system attributes, the HermeticWiper sample also contains expressions for the following. But we couldn't detect any query to these attributes in the analyzed sample.

$ATTRIBUTE_LIST
$EA_INFORMATION
$SECURITY_DESCRIPTOR
$DATA
$INDEX_ROOT
$REPARSE_POINT
$LOGGED_UTILITY_STREAM

Disk Overwrite

After HermeticWiper detects the locations of the files and directories on the physical disk that it considers critical to the system, it enters a waiting period of approximately 20 minutes before starting to overwrite the disk.


```
.text:00FC4048
.text:00FC4048                      loc_FC4048:              ; dwMilliseconds
.text:00FC4048 57                       push    edi
.text:00FC4049 FF 15 0C 51 FC 00        call    ds:Sleep ; Almost 20 minutes long sleep before disk overwrite
.text:00FC404F FF 74 24 68             push    [esp+530h+hEvent] ; hEvent
.text:00FC4053 FF 15 FC 50 FC 00        call    ds:SetEvent
.text:00FC4059 8B 35 D0 50 FC 00        mov     esi, ds:WaitForSingleObject
.text:00FC405F 68 30 75 00 00          push    7530h   ; dwMilliseconds
.text:00FC4064 53                       push    ebx     ; hHandle
.text:00FC4065 FF D6                    call    esi ; WaitForSingleObject
.text:00FC4067 85 DB                    test    ebx, ebx
.text:00FC4069 74 05                    jz      short loc_FC4070
```

Figure 20: Sleep time before disk overwrite

After the time has expired, it creates a thread responsible for writing data to the disk.

The device/directory where HermeticWiper will be overwriting data is numbered as \\\\.\EPMNTDRV\\%u, similar to the previously determined \\\\.\\PhysicalDrive\\%u format and opens the connection to the relevant disk/directory.

Figure 21: Creating the thread responsible for overwriting the disk

Next, the thread-executed piece of code (StartAddress) overwrites it with the WriteFile API function loop.
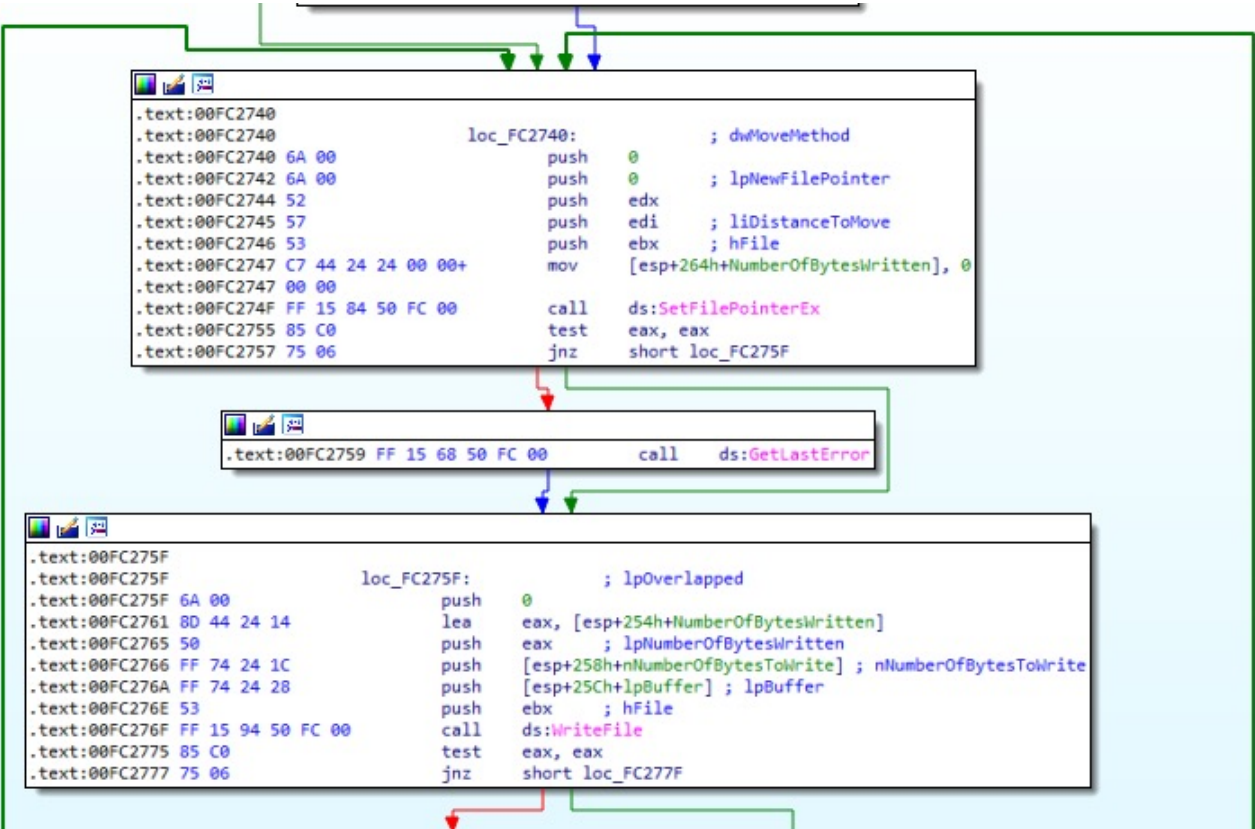
Figure 22: Writefile function loop used to write data to disk

Conclusion

Conclusion

With increased invasion intervention against Ukraine, threat actors widely started to use DDoS attacks and Wiper malware for damaging digital systems.

It shows that the attacks, which are primarily aimed at Ukraine for now, are likely to be directed to neighboring and cooperating states in the long run, depending on how the ongoing processes will take shape.

Information sharing among cyber threat intelligence teams working proactively among effective solutions against such attacks, which are likely to occur shortly, is vital. However, existing threats can be neutralized at the beginning of the attack attempt by using signature-based detection systems due to the techniques, tactics, procedures, and rules established by security researchers.

In this prepared report, we have examined HermeticWiper malware technically. The pest's features, functions, and payloads create an essential awareness in creating a security phenomenon. We recommend taking action with security devices for the IoC findings and the YARA rule shared in the report. To not be a potential target for malware attacks, we recommended taking precautions by considering the attack vectors used.

Indicator of Compromises

Indicator of Compromises

Table 1: Embedded additional payload files detected in the analyzed sample (Compressed)	
Hash (MD5 / SHA1 / SHA256)	**Description**
e5f3ef69a534260e899a36cec459440dc572388defd8f1d98760d31c700f42d5	DRV_X64
b01e0c6ac0b8bcde145ab7b68cf246deea9402fa7ea3aede7105f7051fe240c1	DRV_X86
bd0141e88a0d56b508bc52db4dab68a49b6027a486e4d9514ec0db006fe71eed	DRV_XP_X64
b6f2e008967c5527337448d768f2332d14b92de22a1279fd4d91000bb3d4a0fd	DRV_XP_X86

Table 2: Embedded additional payload files detected in the analyzed sample (Extracted from Archive)	
Hash (MD5 / SHA1 / SHA256)	**Description**
96b77284744f8761c4f2558388e0aee2140618b484ff53fa8b222b340d2a9c84	DRV_X64
8c614cf476f871274aa06153224e8f7354bf5e23e6853358591bf35a381fb75b	DRV_X86
23ef301ddba39bb00f0819d2061c9c14d17dc30f780a945920a51bc3ba0198a4	DRV_XP_X64
2c7732da3dcfc82f60f063f2ec9fa09f9d38d5cfbe80c850ded44de43bdb666d	DRV_XP_X86

Table 3: Various additional files embedded in the .rsrc section in other samples	
Hash (MD5 / SHA1 / SHA256)	**Description**
5ceebaf1cbb0c10b95f7edd458804a646c6f215e	RCDATA_DRV_X64
0231721ef4e4519ec776ff7d1f25c937545ce9f4	RCDATA_DRV_X86
9c2e465e8dfdfc1c0c472e0a34a7614d796294af	RCDATA_DRV_XP_X64
ee764632adedf6bb4cf4075a20b4f6a79b8f94c0	RCDATA_DRV_XP_X86

Indicator of Compromises

Hash (MD5 / SHA1 / SHA256)	Description
0d8cc992f279ec45e8b8dfd05a700ff1f0437f29	HermeticWiper EXE
61b25d11392172e587d8da3045812a66c3385451	HermeticWiper EXE
912342f1c840a42f6b74132f8a7c4ffe7d40fb77	HermeticWiper EXE
9518e4ae0862ae871cf9fb634b50b07c66a2c379	HermeticWiper EXE
d9a3596af0463797df4ff25b7999184946e3bfa2	HermeticWiper EXE
1bc44eef75779e3ca1eefb8ff5a64807dbc942b1e4a2672d77b9f6928d292591	HermeticWiper EXE
0385eeab00e946a302b24a91dea4187c1210597b8e17cd9e2230450f5ece21da	HermeticWiper EXE
ca3c4cd3c2edc816c1130e6cac9bdd08f83aef0b8e6f3d09c2172c854fab125f	HermeticWiper EXE
3c557727953a8f6b4788984464fb77741b821991acbf5e746aebdd02615b1767	HermeticWiper EXE
912342F1C840A42F6B74132F8A7C4FFE7D40FB77	HermeticWiper EXE
61B25D11392172E587D8DA3045812A66C3385451	HermeticWiper EXE
2c10b2ec0b995b88c27d141d6f7b14d6b8177c52818687e4ff8e6ecf53adf5bf	HermeticWiper EXE

Table 4: Other HermeticWiper executables detected

YARA Rule - 1

```
rule hermeticwiper {
  meta:
    hash= "1bc44eef75779e3ca1eefb8ff5a64807dbc942b1e4a2672d77b9f6928d292591"
  strings:
    $s1 = "\\\\?\\C:\\Windows\\System32\\winevt\\Logs" fullword wide
    $s2 = "\\\\?\\C:\\Documents and Settings" fullword wide
    $s3 = "C:\\System Volume Information" fullword wide
    $s4 = "\\\\.\\EPMNTDRV\\%u" fullword wide
    $s5 = "C:\\Windows\\SYSVOL" fullword wide
    $s6 = "PhysicalDrive%u" wide ascii nocase
    $cert = "Hermetica Digital Ltd" wide ascii nocase
  condition:
    uint16(0) == 0x5a4d and filesize < 300KB and
    all of them
}
```

YARA Rule - 2

```
import "hash"
import "pe"

rule find_hermetic
{
  strings:
        $a1 = {57 56 53 33 ff 8b 44}        // HEX from offset @ 0x0400
    $a2 = {48 73 28 73 ac 8c}          // HEX from offset @ 0x010
  condition:
        $a1 or $a2
        or hash.md5(0, filesize) == "84ba0197920fd3e2b7dfa719fee09d2f"
        or hash.md5(0, filesize) == "94bc2ff3969d9775de508e1181318deb"
}
```

Contact

Tackling regional and global threat actors requires greater cooperation between the public and private sectors. One of the biggest contributors to this collaboration is undoubtedly the technology partners that provide digital risk protection applications and cyber threat intelligence services. With the services to be received in this area, you can get support on the latest attack trends, vulnerability intelligence, intelligence work for your brand, the technique, tactics, procedures of threat actors, the appearance of your institution on the internet, attack surface discovery and many more. Brandefense responds to all of these needs of the industry with an all-in-one perspective, on a single platform and without the need for any internal installation.

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