# Mallory – a threat to your mobile device?

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### OUTLINE OF THE TALK

- Smart devices versus PCs
- WebView versus Web 2.0
- Tracking
- Certificates
- Mallory
- Countermeasures.

#### On a desktop machine:

- SSL secures transmissions between a browser and a web server.
- Applications are Web-based using Web 2.0 technologies (allowing creation and sharing of online information) and can be displayed on the in-built web browser.
- Browsers have a pre-installed list of trusted CAs and communicate with a web server that has been issued a certificate from one of these CAs.
- The initial step is an exchange of SSL certificates issued by a Certificate Authority.

#### On the smartphone platform:

- APPS can be either web- or client-based.
- Client-based applications use the WebView class to host HTML content in an APP.
- Smartphones are sold with a set of pre-installed root certificates and APPs.

## Web 2.0 versus WebView

- A Web-based application uses Web 2.0 technologies: creation and sharing of online information, and display on the in-built web browser.
- Mobile operating systems provide a client-based web container, called 'WebView' which hosts HTML content in an APP.
- Mobile browsers provide less support for display of connection details and less warning of mixed content on html pages than desktop browsers.

## Web 2.0 versus WebView security

- Two essential pieces of Web 2.0's security infrastructure are weakened if WebView and its APIs are used:
  - the Trusted Computing Base at the client side, and
  - the sandbox protection implemented by browsers.
- Using <u>addJavascriptInterface()</u> allows JavaScript to control your Android application. This can be a dangerous security issue.
- With WebView, many attacks can be launched either against APPs or by them; in particular, the current approach to sandboxing to test potential malware is impeded. [1,2]

## THE ROLE OF ADVERTISING

- Developers include advertising libraries provided by official APP sites or by third-party advertising companies (e.g. Flurry, InMobi).
- APP developers earn revenue from in-application advertisements and are encouraged to market their APPs free of charge; the more advertising libraries embedded in their APPs, the higher the revenue.
- They also want to identify user preferences in order to offer customized services; for this identifying the user and/or device is necessary.

### How this information is obtained

- There are several common methods of obtaining the above information. These include:
  - Malware
  - Permission system abuses via APPs
  - MiTM attacks
  - Certificate compromise.

I will consider each of them in this talk.

### **MALWARE**

#### Malicious Software:

- You may download software that can monitor where you go online and record your keystrokes.
- This allows the software to record confidential Internet banking passwords, logons, and other personal information.
- Criminals can then access that information to commit fraud.

### **SMARTPHONE APPS and MALWARE**

- Smartphones offer APPs from both official sites and third-party markets.
- Official markets regularly test APPs to make sure they do not contain malware.
- In third-party markets, APPs are not checked to determine if they are safe.
- Individuals can post APPs on third-party markets which look similar to official market APPs but which contain malware.

# SOME APPS YOU MAY HAVE ON YOUR SMARTPHONE:



## SECURING APPS

- All operating system providers attempt to protect the user from abuse of APPs.
- The Android (Google) framework asks the user at APP install-time to authorise connections the APP may need to make.
- Microsoft, Blackberry and Apple all have their own ways of achieving security goals to protect the user.

## SAMPLE PERMISSIONS

Most commonly used permissions

Permission ID   Permission Name	
pms0001	INTERNET
pms0004	WRITE_EXTERNAL_STORAGE
pms0005	READ_PHONE_STATE
pms0006	ACCESS_NETWORK_STATE
pms0007	VIBRATE
pms0011	READ_LOGS
pms0013	RECEIVE_BOOT_COMPLETED
pms0021	SEND <sub>-</sub> SMS
pms0023	ACCESS_WIFI_STATE
pms0030	READ_SMS
pms0031	WRITE_SMS

## ADVERTIZING AND APPS

- The business model major challenge in the development of APPs.
- Solved by means of advertising revenue.
- Google offers an APP software development kit that enables Android developers to add advertising libraries into their applications to generate revenue.
- Third-party application developers are motivated by the revenue earned from APP advertising and embed many ads in their APPs.

## **BENEFITS & THREATS OF ADS**

- From an ad, the OS connects to an advertizing server which might collect the IMEI code or the IMSI number found in the sim card, thus identifying the mobile device.
- Such identification allows developers to offer customized services.
- Researchers have found APPs in the APP markets which send these phone identifiers to developers without informing the user.

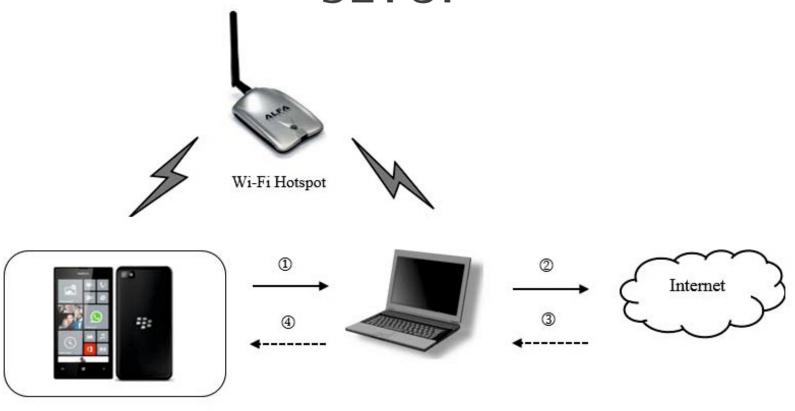
## TRACKING SETTINGS

- On smartphones, all major operating systems (Google, Apple, Microsoft, Blackberry) allow the user to adjust tracking settings related to *Location Services* and to *Advertizing*.
- The setting can usually be turned 'off' or 'on'; in some cases tracking cannot be turned off but can be 'limited'.

## MY TEAM'S TEST SETUP

- My team decided to check these settings to determine how well they worked.
- We set up a method based on easily available software linking to wifi connections.
- ▶ The software we used is called *Mallory*.
- We used the setup to test what data is captured when phones are being tracked.

# THE MALLORY WIFI INTERCEPT SETUP



Smartphones: Windows Phone 8 (left) & BlackBerry 10 (right)

Laptop running Mallory on a virtual machine

External Servers

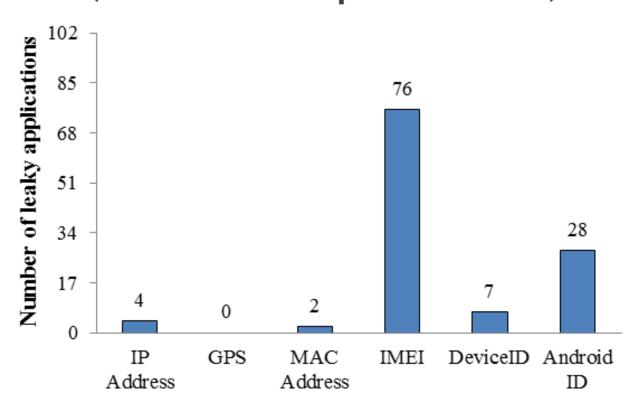
## CONTRIBUTIONS OF MY TEAM IN THIS AREA

- We demonstrate that, without any explicit mention of it in the Terms and Conditions agreement, advertising libraries can access the mobile device's Device ID and Subscriber ID.
- We estimate that there are, on average, three advertising libraries included in any application downloaded from third-party markets.
- We observe that Android APPs that make use of permission systems are also likely to track the activity timeline of a user.

### WHAT IS TRACKED?

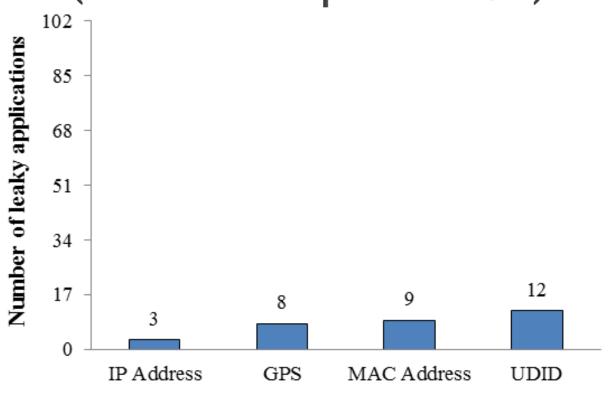
- For location, the network address and global position (GPS) are obtained.
- For advertising, the unique identifiers of the device and of the SIM card are obtained.
- The user would normally expect that if she turns 'off' a tracking setting, then none of this information would be collected.
- My team's research showed that this is not the case:

## Data Leaked from Android APPs with Tracking OFF (from a sample of 102)



Keywords (Android)

## Data Leaked from iOS APPs with Tracking OFF (from a sample of 102)



Keywords (iOS)

## HOW ABOUT TRACKING ON?

- My team also determined that when tracking (for either location or advertising) was turned on, the user's smartphone was not always tracked.
- We did similar work, obtaining similar results, with Blackberry and Windows 8 smartphones.
- APPs for iOS and Android were chosen if they were developed by the same developer; this was also true for Blackberry and Windows APPs. (So we could observe differences in developer behaviour.)

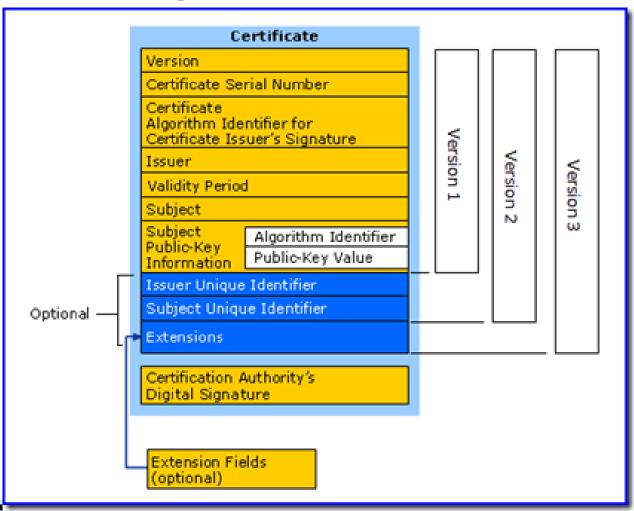
## SUMMARIZING OUR RESULTS

- Applications are capable of leaking phonerelated information without the user's knowledge.
- Third-party advertising libraries were the principal cause of all the information leaks that were recorded for our datasets.
- Apps are not updated to reflect any updated protections of the host OS.
- Since APPs with advertising are often not malicious, they are not identified by antivirus software.

## TAKING MALLORY FURTHER

- Once we had Mallory set up between a device and a server, we tested its use in 'Man-inthe-Middle' attacks.
- In particular, we were interested in capturing and reading data between the phone and a server.
- Such connections, especially to 'secured' websites are based on certificates used to ensure a 'trusted relationship'.

# An X.509 certificate contains the digitally signed ID of the issuer

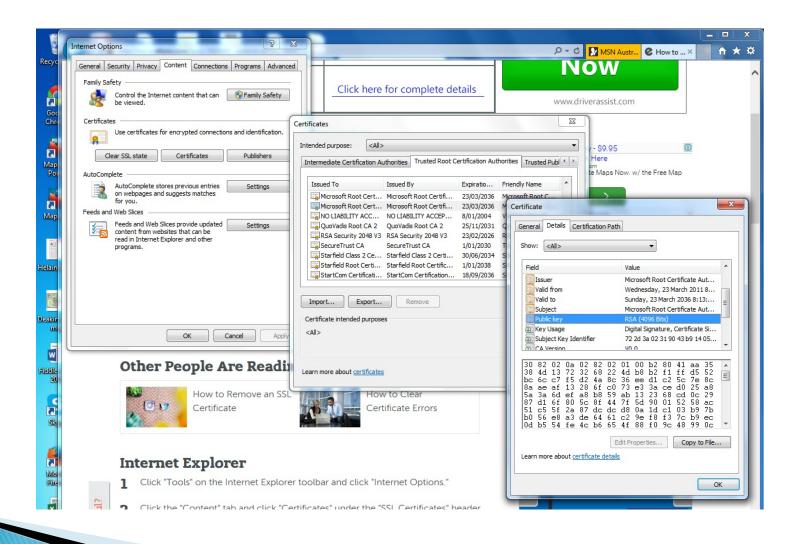


## Certificate Verification

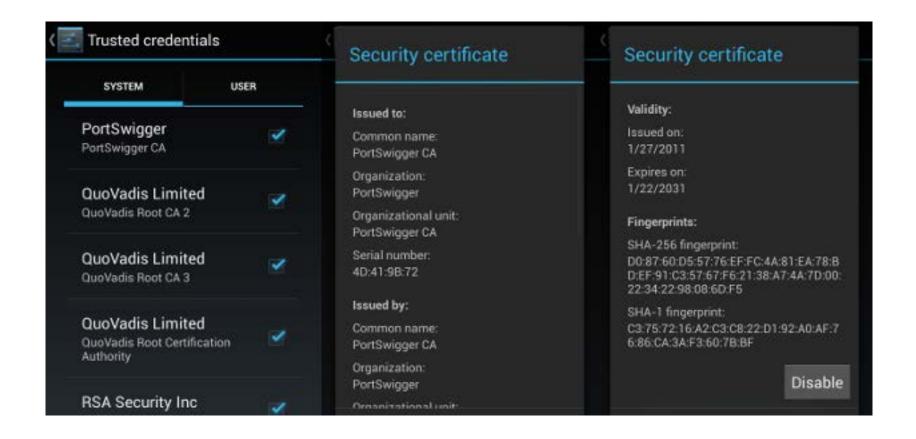
A digital certificate links a subject identity and a public/private key in a signed and therefore verifiable digital document.

- The subject of the certificate must match the resource subject (eg.URL)
- The validity period must be within the time frame the certificate is planning on being used (and must be unrevoked).
- The certificate must be used by a trusted Certificate Authority. (Match with an existing certificate will do.)

## Example of a web browser certificate



# Disabling some of the 160 Root Certs on an Android Smartphone



## MISUSE OF CERTIFICATES:

- From a study quoted in [\*] on https use, of 13,500 Android APPS tested, over1000 did not validate the host name.
- Any CA can issue a browser-acceptable certificate for any site.
- "In the research literature, it is becoming more common for threat models to assume an adversary possesses a valid certificate for a targeted site."

[\*]. Clark and van Oorschot (2012). 'SoK:SSL and HTTPS'. Proceedings of the IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy.

## Man-in-The-Middle Attacks

The Mallory setup is described at <a href="https://bitbucket.org/IntrepidusGroup/mallory/">https://bitbucket.org/IntrepidusGroup/mallory/</a> /wiki/Home

- We set up MiTM attacks against smartphones Android v.4+, iOS v.6.2, Blackberry Z10 and Windows 8,
- using laptop software:
  - Oracle VM VirtualBox
  - Ubuntu

### Man-in-the-Middle Attacks

- MiTM is an active eavesdropping attack.
- The attacker inserts himself between the client/server communication flows.
- Once inserted, the attacker relays traffic to and from the client and server without either endpoint noticing the presence of a third-party.
- Attackers are now focusing on smartphone users as their MiTM victims.
- We describe three popular attacks (SSL Hijacking, SSL Stripping, DNS Spoofing) which target smartphone applications.

## SSL HIJACKING

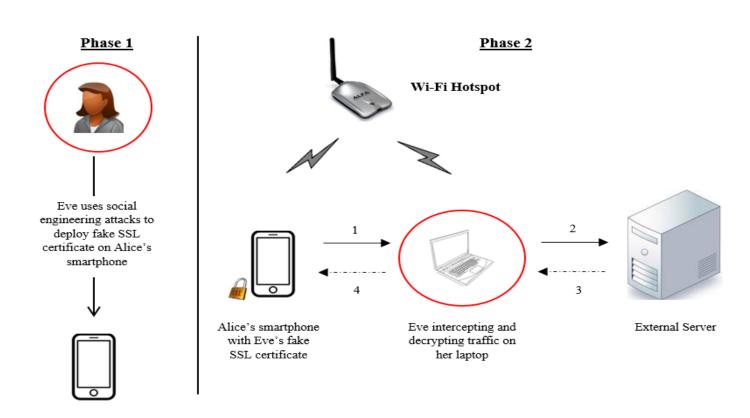
#### Phase 1:

- Using social engineering, Eve finds out Alice's favourite games, and
- tricks her to install a free application.
- The free app contains a fake SSL certificate.

#### Phase 2:

- Eve sets up a wifi hotspot near Alice's device, and
- captures and decrypts all the traffic from and to the device
- as shown in the next Figure.

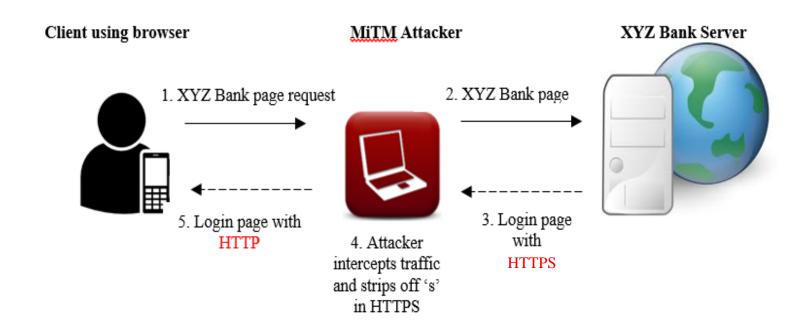
## SSL HIJACKING DIAGRAM



## SSL STRIPPING

- When a user types https, http or part of a URL, normally, the application directs the traffic over an HTTPS connection;
- The victim believes he is communicating over an HTTPS connection.
- The MiTM SSL Strip attack intercepts the HTTPS redirect and maps the link to its HTTP equivalent.
- The attacker communicates with the server over an HTTPS connection, while the client (unknowingly) receives traffic over an HTTP connection.
- This is depicted in the next Figure.

# SSL STRIPPING DIAGRAM



## DNS SPOOFING

- This MiTM attack targets the DNS protocol which translates logical web addresses into their corresponding IP addresses.
- To carry out DNS Spoofing, the attacker
  - intercepts a DNS query,
  - extracts its unique ID, and
  - creates a fake DNS response for the client.
- Currently, such attacks cannot be easily detected on the smartphone.

#### SSL PINNING

- Attempts to prevent SSL Hijacking.
- Ensures that the application checks the server's certificate against a known copy bundled in the application before it is deployed on the market.
- Is the responsibility of the application developer.
- The developer specifies in the APP source code the certificates that should be trusted.

## LIMITATIONS OF SSL PINNING

- Relies heavily on correct implementation by the developer.
- Can be disabled by reverse engineering the application and forcing it to accept spoofed SSL certificates.
- Developers using third-party advertising libraries are required to consent to the use of the certificates provided by the advertising companies.
- Implementation of SSL Pinning varies depending on the host OS.

#### DNS and DNSSEC

- The Domain Name System (DNS) is a query mechanism linking logical names to IP addresses.
- No authentication checks are done during this process, which provides opportunities for attackers to divert traffic via MiTM proxies.
- DNSSec (introduced in 1997) uses Public Key Cryptography to authenticate the origin of data and data integrity.
- Digital signatures are computed for legitimate URLs and stored;
- When directing to an IP address, a digital signature is computed and checked against the stored data.

#### LIMITATIONS OF DNSSEC

- Bandwidth and storage requirements are increased by about a factor of 6 over DNS.
- The most important advantages of enhanced DNS transaction security can be reached using existing infrastructures and technologies.
- The amount of software that allows implementation of DNSSec on DNS servers is limited.
- All the layers including the Root zone have to use the same digital signing algorithm.

#### **SETTING UP MALLORY\***

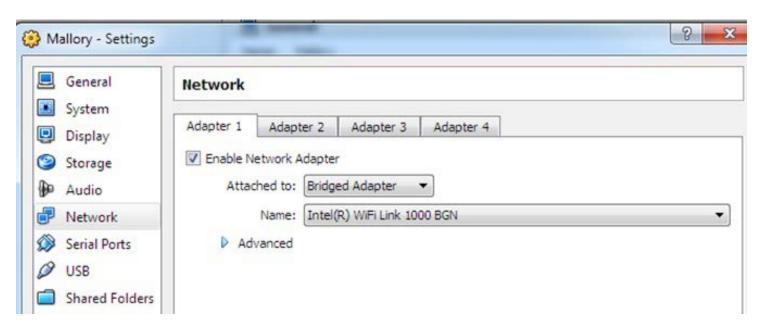
**Step 1**: Set up Virtual Machine (VM)

- Download executable file onto laptop from https://www.virtualbox.org/wiki/Downloads
- Run .exe file and install Oracle VirtualBox
- Download Ubuntu 11.04\* from <a href="http://old-releases.ubuntu.com/releases/natty/">http://old-releases.ubuntu.com/releases/natty/</a>
  - Either burn the image on a CD or download it on a USB stick.

\*Copyright V. Moonsamy.

### Step 1 – continued

- Important: Make sure that Network settings for Ubuntu\* are as below:
- Back to Virtual Box, create a new VM and install Ubuntu.



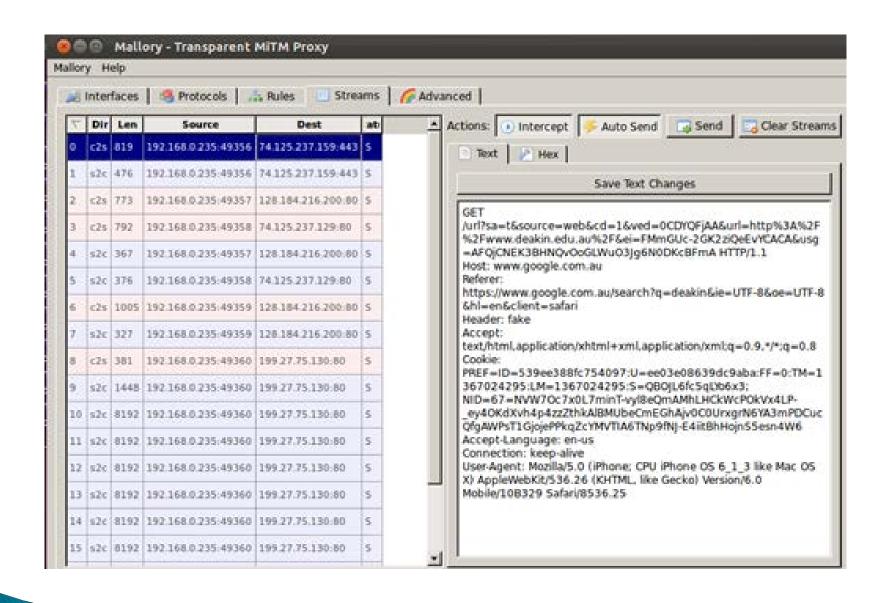
### SETTING UP MALLORY - cont'd

- Step 2: Install Mallory in VM.
- Step 3: Configure Mallory add DNS settings and usernames, and restart.
- Step 4: Configure Smartphone on same network as the PPTP server (connected to a wireless access point on the LAN).

## The steps cont'd

- Step 5: Start Mallory by opening two consoles on the Ubuntu VM.
- Step 6: Configure the Mallory GUI.
- Step 7: Access the Internet on the smartphone over the VPN; Mallory will capture the traffic.

See the next slide:



#### Mallory picking up a plaintext password



POST /ServiceLoginAuth HTTP/1.1 Accept-Encoding: gzip,deflate Origin: https://accounts.google.com Accept-Language: en-GB,en;q=0.8

User-Agent: Mozilla/5.0 (BB10: Touch) AppleWebKit/537.10+ (KHTML, like Gecko) Version/10.1.0.1720 Mobile Safari/537.10+

Content-Type: application/x-www-form-urlencoded

Accept: text/html,application/xhtml+xml,application/xml;q=0.9,\*/\*;q=0.8

Referer:

https://accounts.google.com/ServiceLogin?service=mail&passive=true&continue=http://mail.google.com/mail/?ui%3Dmobile %26zyp%3Dl&scc=1&ltmpl=ecobxgm&nui=5&btmpl=mobile

Cookie: NID=67=IKIuOCLYvQDU7f-II1YbC3dDQIhB--

CFTwe0R0o9MAwObVy8DYSnUi3aQOWnjH4cVtHxw\_NQj\_UzPZTpJysp4aYGzis1dgVGkXNgEOGNIxE7rJdzhk5Br9rLSje3igvN; utma=72592003.234945783.1373463266.1373463266.1373463266.1;

\_utmz=72592003.1373463266.1.1.utmcsr=(direct)|utmccn=(direct)|utmcmd=(none); GAPS=1:-

LqM0ZSXIHv23xjJX0LWJC4EuEx2FA:rBFyGu7EIZNwzGJG; GALX=FLvl70EJhG0;

GMAIL\_LOGIN=T1373500230396/1373500230396/1373500252528

Host: accounts.google.com Connection: keep-alive Content-Length: 648

continue=http%3A%2F%2Fmail.google.com%2Fmail%2F%3Fui%3Dmobile%26zyp%3Dl&service=mail&nui=5&dsh=-2795779 443633958655&ltmpl=ecobxgm&btmpl=mobile&scc=1&GALX=FLvl70EJhG0&timeStmp=&secTok=&\_utf8=%E2%98%83&bgr esponse=%21A0IH\_smkRoMjv0Rqa5OL12ixkgIAAAEhUgAAADUqAO7cua7BGERsENoSpxCknWTkPdErnAtG5V8aUkrJGLGxFFWR6 k90NxZNau5c\_h\_lb44O5oFw6ljmeVxR2HO6SaJix4TFfaPC--

esq4\_3g26qvqnkcUrfoPkEeRg\_Vok4dOKTwOaKUXHaZEd3NMkH8F\_T8eTbUyX-8E\_Jm7qZNQ39jn24eXWpCTaMx\_9dva74Jd5NPAvDAfjS2i2ms-kflAi4aaEJqYvhLCPM6lyoMyv7ja\_kYaWlOgXogq2n-aKbIFluaWPl659J5rfMLyaY0Q7048KA5mj1\_yuioZAbQ9YmCSQruFthUhPi-a4SNXS&Email=rahul&Passwd=rahul123&signIn=Sign+in&PersistentCookie=yes&rmShown=1

# SOME OF THE CHALLENGES WE FACED IN SETTING UP MALLORY

- Unstable wifi connections;
- Different OS use different terminology and require different settings:
  - With Android and iOS we used a VPN connection,
  - VPN was not available with Blackberry and Windows
     a wifi adapter was used instead.

## UPPER LEVEL SUGGESTIONS FOR MITIGATING THESE PROBLEMS

- Re advertising
  - give the user the option of denying sending data to third parties.
  - make developers adhere to strict rules about certificate use.
  - Companies such as <a href="http://www.geoedge.com">http://www.geoedge.com</a>
     offer to ensure that your 'mobile ads' are 'clean and safe', by checking for
    - Malware
    - Malicious Code Activities
    - Redirects

# Enhancement of certificate trust models

See the research literature including:

- J. Clark and P.C.van Oorschot (2012). 'SoK:SSL and HTTPS'. Proceedings of the IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy.
- Yasodharan, R., R. Sivabalakrishnan, and P. Devendran. 2015 "Trusted Routing with an Efficient Certificate Revocation for Mobile Ad Hoc Network." IJISET
- Mall, Tarun, and Samarth Gupta. 2014 "Critical Evaluation of Security Framework in Android Applications: Android-level security and Application-level security." Journal of Computers and Electronics Engineering.
- Vallina-Rodriguez, Narseo, et al. 2014 "A Tangled Mass: The Android Root Certificate Stores." Proceedings of the 10th ACM International on Conference on emerging Networking Experiments and Technologies. ACM.

## Measures that users can apply

User understanding and user behavior are key aspects that can mitigate the propagation of rogue applications. This includes:

- User comprehension of OS security
- User carries out a thorough background check before downloading an APP
  - Read reviews, ratings, number of downloads, ...
- Modify Phone Settings to turn off targeted advertising
  - Does not stop ads, only prevents APP from using unique device IDs as targets

(Explained at http://dottech.org/21999/android-tip-turn-off-interest-based-ads-by-flipping-a-switch-in-android-market/)

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- 11. Pearce, P., Felt, A. P., Nunez, G. & Wagner, D. (2012). AdDroid: Privilege Separation for Applications and Advertisers in Android. *Proceedings of AsiaCCS*.