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Lecture: (6)

Transport Layer Security (TLS) and Secure Sockets Layer (SSL)

Subject: authentication and access control

second Stage

Lecturer: Asst. Lecturer. Suha Alhussieny

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Transport Layer Security (TLS) and Secure Sockets Layer (SSL)

TLS and SSL are cryptographic protocols designed to provide communications security over a computer network. Several versions of the protocols find widespread use in applications such as web browsing, email, instant messaging, and voice over IP (VoIP).

Websites can use TLS to secure all communications between their servers and web browsers.

- ✓ Secure Socket Layer (SSL) provides security services between TCP and applications that use TCP. The Internet standard version is called Transport Layer Service (TLS).
- ✓ SSL/TLS provides confidentiality using symmetric encryption and message integrity using a message authentication code(MAC).
- ✓ SSL/TLS includes protocol mechanisms to enable two TCP users to determine the security mechanisms and services they will use.
- ✓ HTTPS (HTTP over SSL) refers to the combination of HTTP and SSL to implement secure communication between a Web browser and a Web server.
- ✓ Secure Shell (SSH) provides secure remote logon and other secure client/server facilities.

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Web Traffic Security Approaches

Several approaches to providing Web security are possible. The various approaches that have been considered are similar in the services they provide and, to some extent, in the mechanisms that they use, but they differ with respect to their scope of applicability and their relative location within the TCP/IP protocol stack.

One way to provide Web security is to use IP security (IPsec). The advantage of using IPsec is that it is transparent to end users and applications and provides a general-purpose solution. Furthermore, IPsec includes a filtering capability so that only selected traffic need incur the overhead of IPsec processing.

The foremost example of this approach is the Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) and the follow-on Internet standard known as Transport Layer Security (TLS). At this level, there are two implementation choices. For full generality, SSL (or TLS) could be provided as part of the underlying protocol suite and therefore be transparent to applications. Alternatively, SSL can be embedded in specific packages. For example, Netscape and Microsoft Explorer browsers come equipped with SSL, and most Web servers have implemented the protocol.

Application-specific security services are embedded within the particular application. Figure below shows examples of this architecture. The advantage of this approach is that the service can be tailored to the specific needs of a given application.

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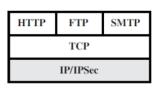


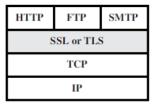
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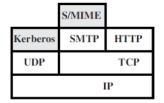
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(a) Network level

(b) Transport level

(c) Application level

SSL Architecture

SSL is designed to make use of TCP to provide a reliable end-to-end secure service. SSL is not a single protocol but rather two layers of protocols, as illustrated in Figure below.

The SSL Record Protocol provides basic security services to various higher layer protocols. In particular, the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), which provides the transfer service for Web client/server interaction, can operate on top of SSL. Three higher-layer protocols are defined as part of SSL: the Handshake Protocol, The Change Cipher Spec Protocol, and the Alert Protocol. These SSL-specific protocols are used in the management of SSL exchanges and are examined later in this section.

Two important SSL concepts are the SSL session and the SSL connection, which are defined in the specification as follows.

Connection: A connection is a transport (in the OSI layering model definition) that provides a suitable type of service. For SSL, such connections are peer-to-peer

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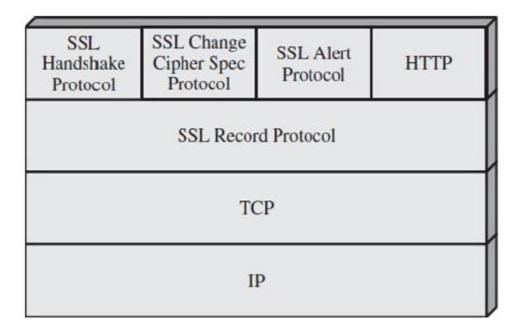
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relationships. The connections are transient. Every connection is associated with one session.

Session: An SSL session is an association between a client and a server. Sessions are created by the Handshake Protocol. Sessions define a set of cryptographic security parameters which can be shared among multiple connections. Sessions are used to avoid the expensive negotiation of new security parameters for each connection.



Between any pair of parties (applications such as HTTP on client and server), there may be multiple secure connections. In theory, there may also be multiple simultaneous sessions between parties, but this feature is not used in practice.

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