

# DEFENDING IN THE DARK

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# Andrew Hoog

CEO | NowSecure

Twitter - @ahoog42

E-mail - [ahoog@nowsecure.com](mailto:ahoog@nowsecure.com)

- Computer scientist
- Mobile security & forensics researcher
- Author, expert witness & inventor



# Contents

Why build a mobile triage tool?

Platform security enhancements

Limitations of current forensic tools

Introducing ios-triage

Summary, next steps, and questions



A black and white historical photograph showing several World War I medical personnel in uniform and helmets. They are gathered around a mobile medical unit, which has a sign that reads "TRIAGE" with a cross symbol. One person is lying on a stretcher in the foreground. The scene is outdoors, likely at a battlefield or a temporary medical facility.

Why build a  
mobile triage tool?



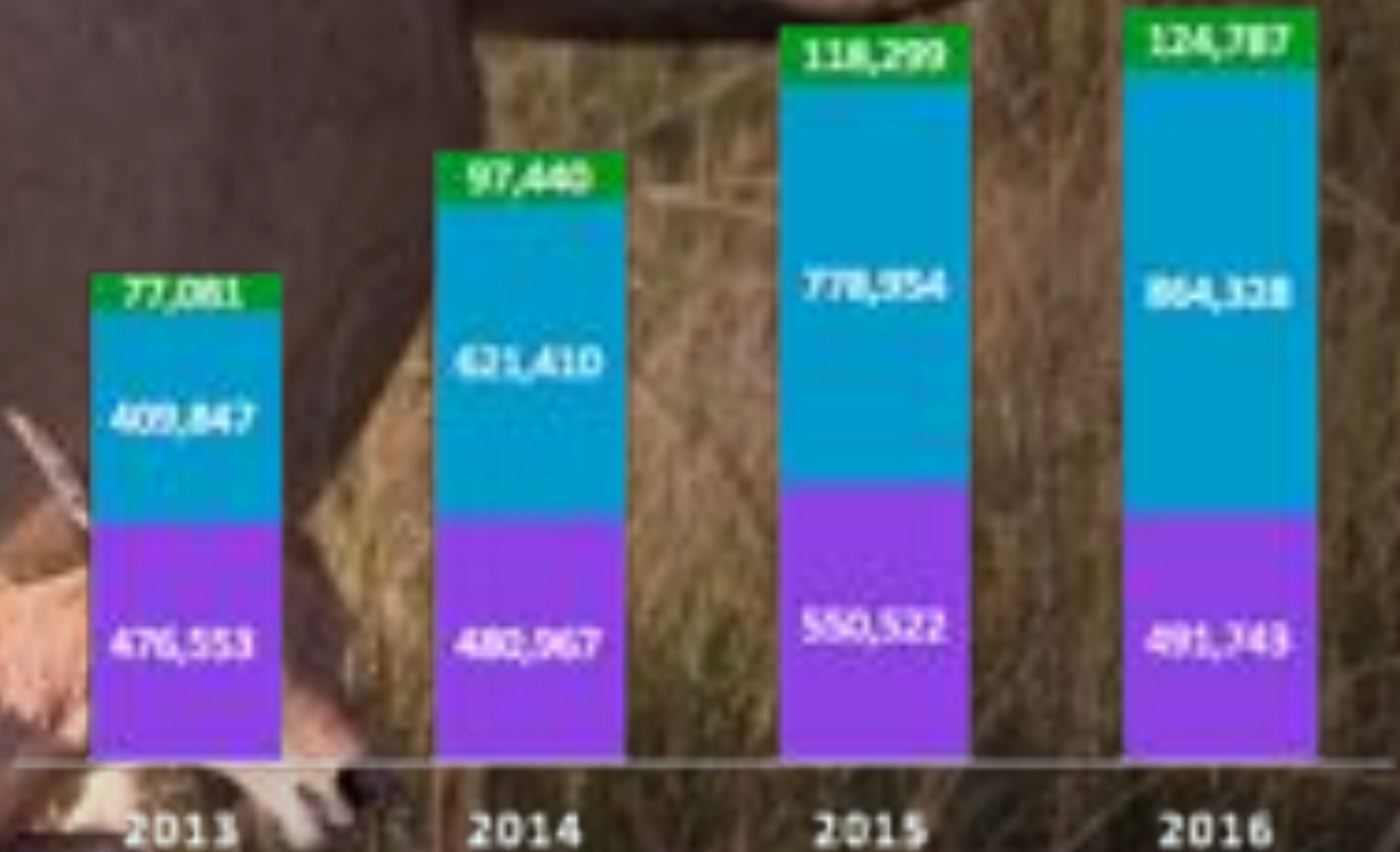
# PREDATOR FOLLOWS PREY: 2 OF 3 MINUTES ARE MOBILE

## TOTAL MINUTES SPENT ON DIGITAL MEDIA

Desktop

Mobile App

Mobile Web



# MOBILE DEVICES COLLECT INCREDIBLE AMOUNTS OF DATA

## Personal data

- SMS
- Contacts
- Browser history
- GPS

## Corporate data

- E-mail
- Contacts
- Documents
- Intellectual property

Rich sensor data



# ANDROID AND IOS HAVE VULNERABILITIES

642

**Google Android CVEs**  
so far in 2017

1,333 CVEs over lifetime (2009-2017)

[http://www.cvedetails.com/product/19997/Google-Android.html?vendor\\_id=1224](http://www.cvedetails.com/product/19997/Google-Android.html?vendor_id=1224)

293

**Apple iOS CVEs**  
so far in 2017

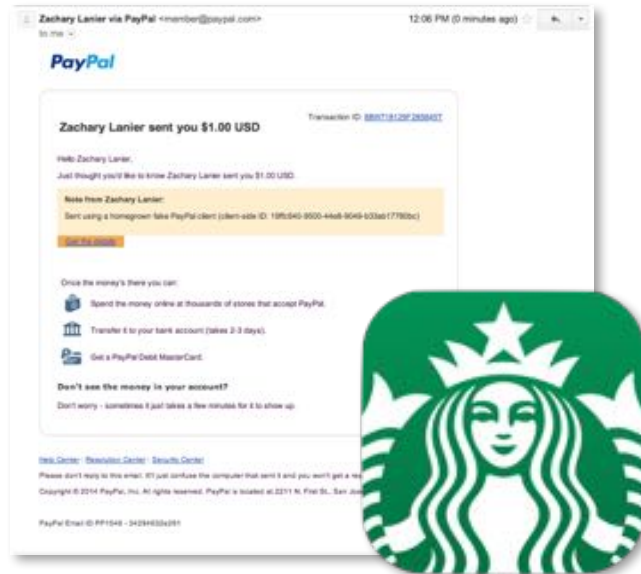
1,277 CVEs over lifetime (2007-2017)

[http://www.cvedetails.com/product/15556/Apple-Iphone-Os.html?vendor\\_id=49](http://www.cvedetails.com/product/15556/Apple-Iphone-Os.html?vendor_id=49)

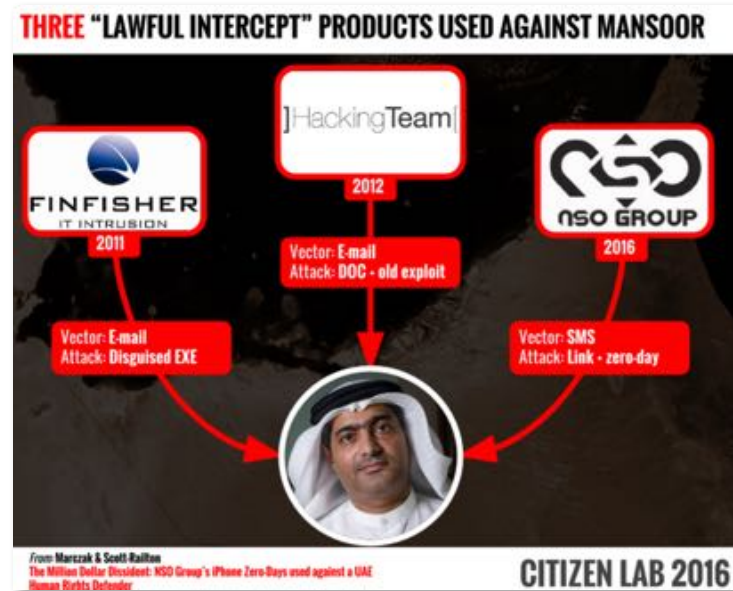


# DEVICES ARE TARGETED

# CYBERCRIME FOR FINANCIAL GAIN



# TARGETED ATTACKS



## THRIVING MARKET FOR MOBILE EXPLOITS



## Hack of Quest Diagnostics App Exposes Data of 34,000 Patients



# HISTORIC RECURRENCE: WEB AND PC ATTACKS AS PROXY

- Malware
- Ransomware
- Targeted attacks

“History may not repeat itself but it sure does rhyme.”  
—*Mark Twain (reputedly)*



A photograph of an American football game in progress. In the foreground, a player in a white jersey with the number 30 is being tackled by a player in a dark blue jersey. Other players in white and dark blue jerseys are visible in the background, some on the ground and others standing. The scene is set on a grass field under a clear sky. The text "Platform security enhancements complicate defense/response" is overlaid in white, centered on the image.

Platform security  
enhancements complicate  
defense/response



# THE APERTURE IS SPIRALING SHUT

Legacy tools  
and methods  
don't work  
for mobile

Platform  
architecture and  
API restrictions  
limit visibility

Platform security  
enhancements disarm  
responders/defenders

Attackers know  
more than the  
rest of us  
(asymmetric  
advantage)

Security telemetry is ephemeral, only one point in time



# 1. PROHIBITING ADMIN/ROOT ACCESS

## PROS

- ▶ Sandboxing & lack of root access limits impact of security flaws – known and unknown
- ▶ Improves privacy by restricting app's access to sensitive device and other app data

## CONS

- ▶ Attackers continue to find ways to elevate privileges, giving them them the advantage
- ▶ Security software cannot run on the system with sufficient access to detect/prevent attacks

## 2. HAMSTRINGING SECURITY TOOLS ON MOBILE DEVICES

### PROS

- ▶ Forces OS vendors to build security into their system
- ▶ Prevents the installation of security apps that might harbor vulnerabilities (e.g., some PC-based security software has serious flaws)
- ▶ Security apps generate data that can easily be abused

### CONS

- ▶ Attackers continue to find ways to elevate privileges, giving them them the advantage
- ▶ Security software cannot run on the system with sufficient access to detect/prevent attacks

# 3. RESTRICTING BACKUPS

## PROS

- ▶ Reduces overall attack surface
- ▶ Data from a device is far less accessible to attackers

## CONS

- ▶ Information critical to investigating a security breach is no longer accessible to defenders
- ▶ Attackers barely have to cover their tracks with few footprints left behind
- ▶ Important device-specific artifacts (e.g. the actual app binary) not available for analysis



# 4. ELIMINATING ACCESS TO APIs & DEVICE DATA

## PROS

- ▶ End users' privacy & data cannot be violated (un)intentionally by developers
- ▶ Reducing complexity and quantity of APIs reduces overall attack surface

## CONS

- ▶ Defenders lack even the most basic visibility into what's happening on the device
- ▶ (Near) continuous monitoring is impossible via an app
- ▶ Forces defenders to physically connect a device to extract relevant telemetry

# 5. IMPLEMENTING SECURE BOOT MECHANISMS

## PROS

- ▶ An attacker with physical access to your device can't boot an alternative ROM & extract data
- ▶ Ability to implement "Trusted Computing" capabilities like trusted platform modules (TPMs) and vendor-specific extensions (e.g., KNOX, Qualcomm Haven, etc.)

## CONS

- ▶ Defenders cannot access system images or critical device data for an investigation
- ▶ Security-conscious experts cannot install alternative operating systems
- ▶ Security research, instrumentation & honeypots become incredibly difficult



# Overcoming the limitations of current forensic tools



# LIMITS OF AVAILABLE FORENSIC TOOLS AS RELATES TO MOBILE

- Same fundamentals, but different angle – we need more than court-admissible evidence
- Can't access some data due to platform security enhancements
- Less emphasis on app data and integrity of operating system and apps, key areas defenders examine for compromise

# WHAT A FORENSIC ANALYST IS LOOKING FOR



## STORED AND DELETED DATA

(e.g., iMessages, SMS, e-mail, etc.)



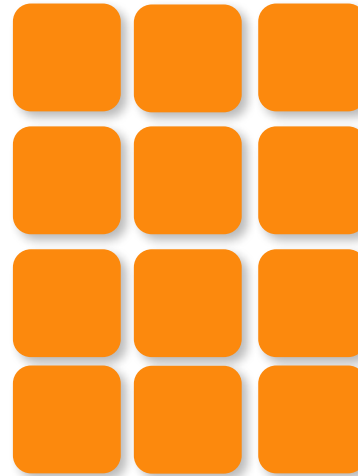
## USER LOCATION HISTORY



## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

(based on the recoverable data)

# WHAT A DEFENDER/RESPONDER IS LOOKING FOR



## DEVICE INTEGRITY INFORMATION

(e.g., OS, boot loader, how healthy is the device itself?)

## APP DATA

(e.g., installed/uninstalled apps, security flaws, data collected)

## TRAFFIC DESTINATIONS

(e.g., was data exfiltrated and if so, where to and is it persistent?)

An aerial photograph of a rocket launch site. A large, bright orange and yellow explosion is visible at the base of the launch pad, with a plume of white smoke rising from it. The launch pad is a light-colored, rectangular structure. The surrounding area is a brown, arid landscape with some dark, winding paths or roads. The text "Introducing ios-triage" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

Introducing ios-triage



# ios-triage

WHAT IT IS:	a mobile incident response tool
WHO IT'S FOR:	incident responders, defenders, hackers
WHAT IT DOES:	extracts mobile artifacts that matter, presents them for analysis, combines and correlates them with other relevant data
HOW IT'S DIFFERENT:	provides more visibility into data relevant to defending against or responding to mobile security incidents
WHERE TO GET IT:	<a href="https://github.com/ahoog42/ios-triage">https://github.com/ahoog42/ios-triage</a>

# TOOLSET ARCHITECTURE/WORKFLOW

1

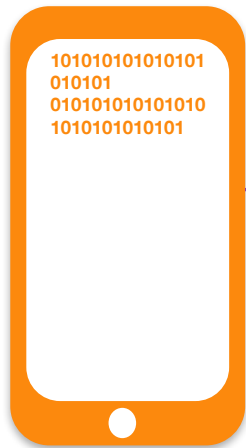
EXTRACT

2

PROCESS

3

REPORT



Unlocked  
& Trusted



USB



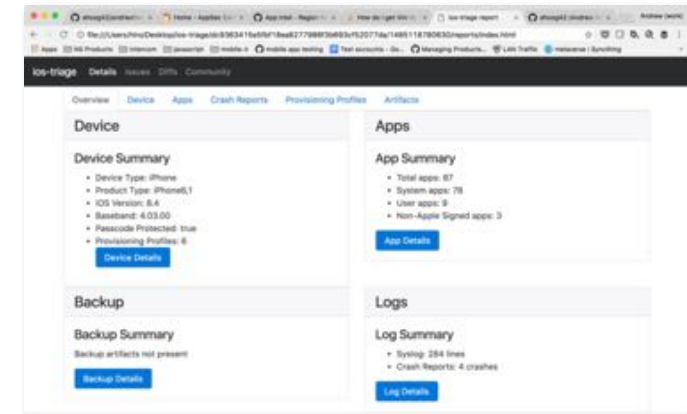
libimobiledevice.

```
<dir>/UDID/epoch/artifacts  
/processed  
/report
```

Multiple epochs  
(i.e., timestamps)

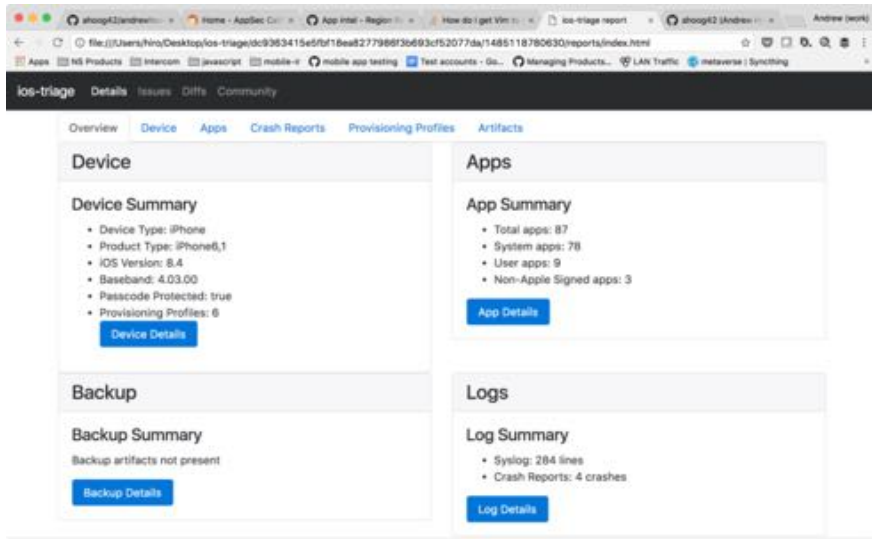
```
3. hiro@metaverse: ~ (zsh)  
Last login: Mon Jan 16 07:06:13 on ttys001  
hiro@metaverse:~$ npm run use node  
Now using node v5.10.1 (npm v3.8.3)  
hiro@metaverse:~$ ios-triage extract -o ~/Desktop/ios-triage  
8:18:42 PM - info: Authorized iDevice found, UDID: 993aa52471a3e6e117eb619927d74f3aa7511bf  
8:18:42 PM - info: output directory set to /Users/hiro/Desktop/ios-triage/993aa52471a3e6e117eb619927d74f3aa7511bf/1484619522645  
8:18:42 PM - info: capturing device syslog...  
8:18:42 PM - info: Skipping device backup  
8:18:43 PM - info: Installed provisioning profiles saved  
8:18:43 PM - info: iOS Device info saved  
8:18:50 PM - info: iOS Device installed apps saved  
8:18:50 PM - info: Crash reports and log saved  
8:18:55 PM - info: completed all extraction functions so we'll now kill deviceSylog  
8:18:55 PM - debug: in getDeviceSyslog, end event fired  
8:18:55 PM - debug: in getDeviceSyslog, close event triggered without error  
8:18:55 PM - info: iOS Device syslog saved  
hiro@metaverse:~$
```

ios-triage process



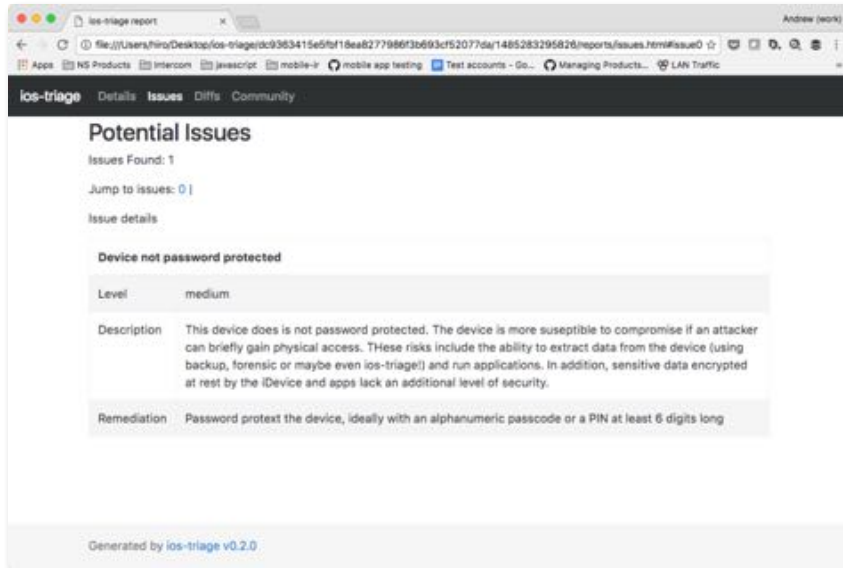
# LIVE DEMO - DETAILS

- Overview of device & app analysis
- Detailed view of artifact data for all domains
- App specific telemetry including entitlements, background modes, privacy sensitive requests & transport security exceptions



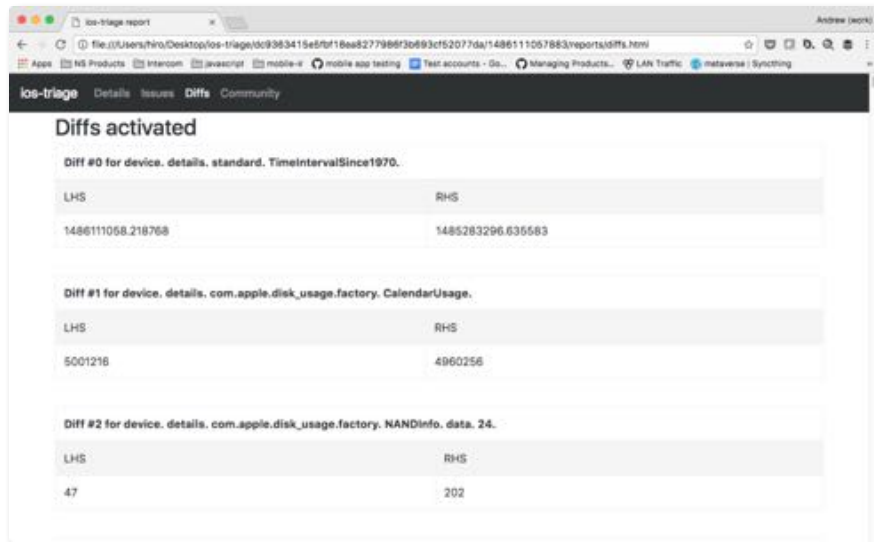
# LIVE DEMO - ISSUES

- Flag issues in one central location
- Includes the issue, level of impact, description & remediation tips
- Flexible & extensible transformation of processed artifacts into issues





# LIVE DEMO - DIFFS



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL `file:///Users/hiro/Desktop/ios-triage/dc9363415e5f0f18ea5277986f3b693cf52077da/1486111057683/reports/diffs.html`. The page title is "ios-triage" and it has tabs for "Details", "Issues", "Diffs", and "Community". The main content is titled "Diffs activated" and lists three diff entries. Each entry has a header and a table with two columns: "LHS" and "RHS".

Diff #0 for device.details.standard.TimeIntervalSince1970.	
LHS	RHS
1486111058.218768	1485283296.635583

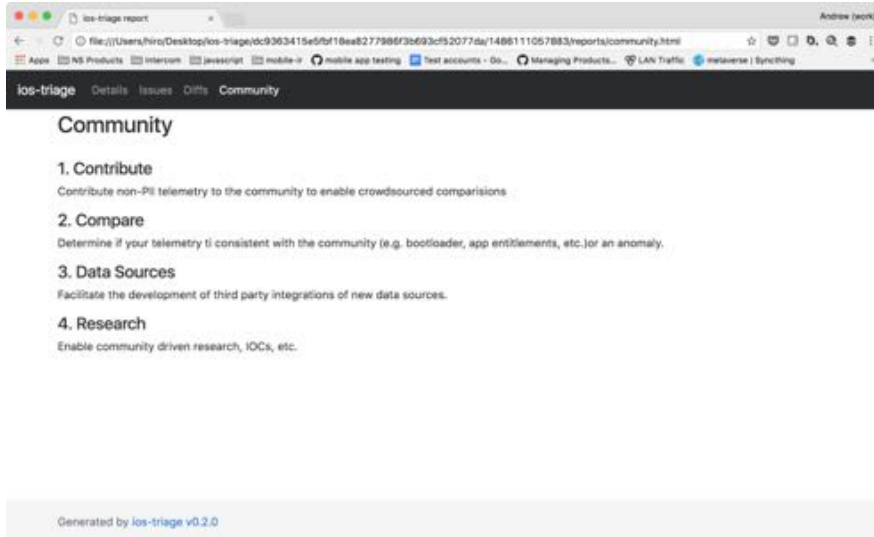
Diff #1 for device.details.com.apple.disk_usage.factory.CalendarUsage.	
LHS	RHS
5001216	4960256

Diff #2 for device.details.com.apple.disk_usage.factory.NANDInfo.data.24.	
LHS	RHS
47	202

- Display `diff` in the output from two separate reports
- Ability to track changes to a device over time

# LIVE DEMO - COMMUNITY



- Contribute non-PII telemetry
- Detect anomalies
- Add new third-party data sources
- Enable community-driven research (e.g. IOCs, TTP, etc.)

# DIFFS BETWEEN iOS 8.x & 10.x+

- iOS 8 showed deleted apps, useful to detect if a forensics app was:
  - Installed
  - Then removed after exfiltration
- Inability to download the actual apps installed on the device
  - Allowing attackers to hide
  - Hinder the ability to determine IOCs, TTPs, etc

# FUTURE WORK

- Allow sharing of non-identifying data to create crowd-sourced database
- Move to a database backend
- Download iOS apps via iTunes & perform static analysis
- Integrate several third-party data sources
- Release android-triage



# HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE

- Run the tool
- Contact me with feedback, bugs, suggestions
  - Twitter: @ahoog42
  - GitHub: <https://github.com/ahoog42>
  - Email: [ahoog@nowsecure.com](mailto:ahoog@nowsecure.com)
- Participate in crowd-sourced efforts
- Pitch in on future development work

A low-angle, close-up shot of a person's legs and feet as they walk down a set of stairs. The person is wearing green trousers and dark sneakers with white soles. The stairs have grey concrete treads and orange-brown wooden risers. The text "Summary & Next Steps" is overlaid in white, centered on the image.

# Summary & Next Steps

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

The platforms build security out rather than in (i.e., attackers can penetrate the “walled garden,” but defenders/responders can’t see what’s going on because we play by the rules)

2

As a result, following the trajectory of traditional computer security is impossible unless the industry changes or we summon the power to make it change

3

We need to diminish attackers’ asymmetric advantage, but without more sharing of more data, we have ephemeral data we can’t compare to anything

# Contact Info

- Project homepage: <https://github.com/ahoog42/ios-triage>

## Contact info

- Twitter: @ahoog42
- Email: [ahoog42@gmail.com](mailto:ahoog42@gmail.com)
- NowSecure email: [ahoog@nowsecure.com](mailto:ahoog@nowsecure.com)