

Maze ransomware continues to be a threat to the consumers

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Maze is a recently highlighted ransomware among the ever-growing list of ransomware families. The ransomware is active from the past one year, although it came into limelight due to its new approach of publishing sensitive data of infected customers publicly.

The malware uses different techniques to gain entry like the use of exploit kits or email impersonation. These phishing emails are having a Word document attachment that contains macros to run the malware in the system.

Maze uses CHA-CHA algorithm for encryption and its key is encrypted using the RSA algorithm. Maze can run with or without mutex —it uses some Russian IPs for the webserver to send information from the victim system(s). It uses RSA encryption request for CnC communication and it will not encrypt the system for the specific region by checking keyboard type.

Stage – I

VBA MACRO

The attached document file has a form containing an input box in which the number array of encrypted URL and path is present. The document file contains an ActiveX object. When it is executed, URL and path are decrypted post which it calls URLDownloadToFileA() that downloads an executable to the specified location.

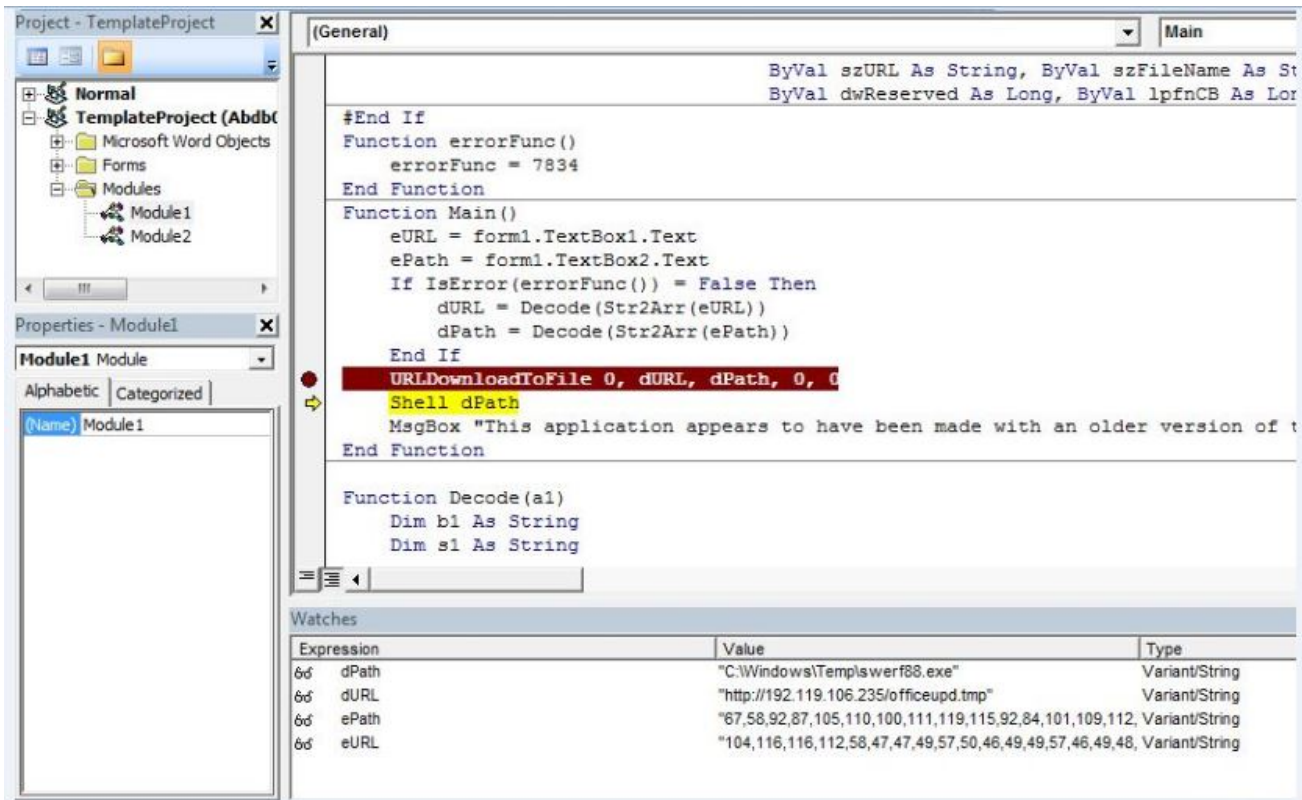


Fig 1. URLDownloadToFileA() Call with their parameters

The number array is read from text box then converted into characters and concatenated to form a URL and path where the file is downloaded. Sometimes it also uses PowerShell to download the file. In most of the cases, file is downloaded at "C:\Windows\temp" location.

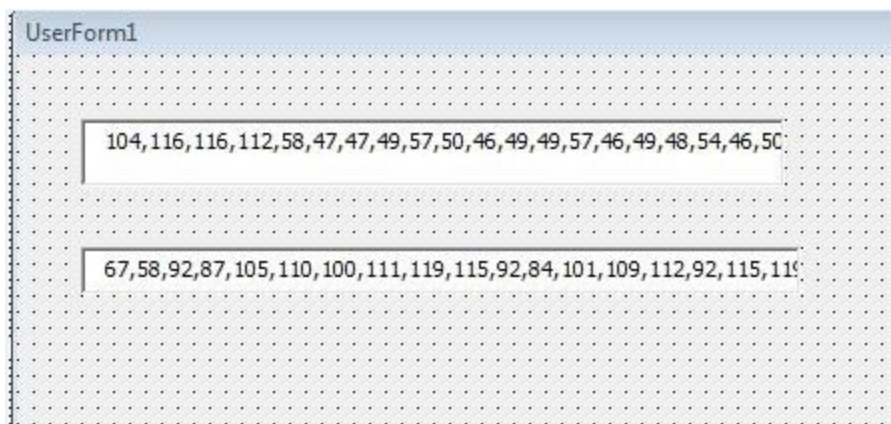


Fig 2. Characters stored in Number Array

Stage – II

A. CRYPTER

The first stage of Maze ransomware is custom cryptor. This cryptor is a packed one with few imports. It loads libraries by calling LoadLibrary() and GetProcAddress() from kernel32.dll. In this cryptor, function names are stored with their Adler32 checksum.

The cryptor is for anti-debugging, it passes junk strings to the function OutputDebugStringW().

```
012D6A5E push 3 ; dwCreationDisposition
012D6A60 push 0 ; lpSecurityAttributes
012D6A62 push 1 ; dwShareMode
012D6A64 push 80000000h ; dwDesiredAccess
012D6A69 push offset FileName ; "C:\\JDUITHuF\\ADis\\opjcab"
012D6A6B call ds:StrStrW
012D6A74 cmp esi, esp
012D6A76 call sub_12E10DC
012D6A7B cmp eax, 0FFFFFFFh
012D6A7E jz short loc_12D6A87

012D6A87 loc_12D6A87:
012D6A89 push offset OutputString ; "Analurhunterteam, good last discussion ..."
012D6A8E call ds:OutputDebugStringW
012D6A94 cmp esi, esp
012D6A96 call sub_12E10DC
012D6A98 mov esi, esp
012D6A9B call ds:GetCommandLineW
012D6AA3 cmp esi, esp
012D6AA5 call sub_12E10DC
012D6AA8 mov [ebp+lpFirst], eax
012D6AAD mov esi, esp
012D6AAF push offset Srch ; "--Didsjdjdj"
012D6AB4 mov eax, [ebp+lpFirst]
012D6AB7 push eax ; lpFirst
012D6AB8 call ds:StrStrW
012D6ABE cmp esi, esp
012D6AC0 call sub_12E10DC
012D6AC5 test eax, eax
012D6AC7 jz short loc_12D6AD0

012D6AD0 loc_12D6AD0:
012D6AD2 push 0Ah ; lpType
012D6AD4 push 65h ; lpName
012D6AD6 push 0 ; hModule
012D6AD9 call ds:FindResourceA
012D6ADE cmp esi, esp
012D6AE0 call sub_12E10DC
012D6AE5 mov [ebp+hResInfo], eax
012D6AE8 mov esi, esp
012D6AEA mov ecx, [ebp+hResInfo]
012D6AED push ecx ; hResInfo
012D6AEE push 0 ; hModule
012D6AF0 call ds:LoadResource
```

Fig 3. Call to OutputDebugStringW()

In the below code, it checks whether the file is present or not, if present it will terminate. Similarly, it also checks specific command-line arguments if it is present it will change execution flow. Then malware loads the resource where actual DLL is present. The loaded resource is encrypted and XOR operation is used with key 0x41. After decryption, we get base64 encoded data.

The image shows two side-by-side assembly windows. The left window displays assembly instructions from address 012D669D to 012D66B1. The instruction at 012D66A6 is highlighted in blue: `xor eax, 41h`. The right window displays assembly instructions from address 012D66B3 to 012D6736. The instruction at 012D6722 is highlighted in pink: `call ds:LoadLibraryW`. A blue arrow points from the highlighted instruction in the left window to the highlighted instruction in the right window, indicating a jump or call.

```

012D669D mov     edx, [ebp+arg_0]
012D66A0 add     edx, [ebp+var_1C]
012D66A3 movsx  eax, byte ptr [edx]
012D66A6 xor     eax, 41h
012D66A9 mov     ecx, [ebp+var_18]
012D66AC add     ecx, [ebp+var_1C]
012D66AF mov     [ecx], al
012D66B1 jmp     short loc_12D668C

012D66B3 loc_12D66B3:
012D66B3 mov     edx, 43h
012D66B8 mov     [ebp+LibFileName], dx
012D66BC mov     eax, 72h
012D66C1 mov     [ebp+var_10], ax
012D66C5 mov     ecx, 79h
012D66CA mov     [ebp+var_34], cx
012D66CE mov     edx, 70h
012D66D3 mov     [ebp+var_32], dx
012D66D7 mov     eax, 74h
012D66DC mov     [ebp+var_30], ax
012D66E0 mov     ecx, 33h
012D66E5 mov     [ebp+var_2E], cx
012D66E9 mov     edx, 32h
012D66EE mov     [ebp+var_2C], dx
012D66F2 mov     eax, 2Eh
012D66F7 mov     [ebp+var_2A], ax
012D66FB mov     ecx, 64h
012D6700 mov     [ebp+var_28], cx
012D6704 mov     edx, 6Ch
012D6709 mov     [ebp+var_26], dx
012D670D mov     eax, 6Ch
012D6712 mov     [ebp+var_24], ax
012D6716 xor     ecx, ecx
012D6718 mov     [ebp+var_22], cx
012D671C mov     esi, esp
012D671E lea   edx, [ebp+LibFileName]
012D6721 push  edx ; lpLibFileName
012D6722 call  ds:LoadLibraryW
012D6728 cnp   esi, esp
012D672A call  sub_12E10DC
012D672F mov     [ebp+hModule], eax
012D6732 cnp   [ebp+hModule], 0
012D6736 jnz   short loc_12D6773

```

Fig 4. Xor Loop and API resolution

After copying all data onto the stack, API names are formed and then it calls Loadlibrary() Win32 API. Then it decodes base64 data by calling CryptStringToBinaryA() API. The decrypted buffer is again decrypted using CHA-CHA 20 algorithm which brings the actual payload of Maze ransomware. Along with payload (which is a DLL of Maze), it also decrypts shellcode. By using CreateThread() API, it executes the shellcode.

The image shows a single assembly window with instructions from address .text:012D6C6C to .text:012D6CBE. The instruction at .text:012D6C78 is highlighted in red: `push 0`. The instruction at .text:012D6C92 is highlighted in pink: `call ds:CreateThread`. The instruction at .text:012D6C98 is highlighted in red: `cnp esi, esp`. The instruction at .text:012D6CA1 is highlighted in pink: `push eax ; hObject`.

```

.text:012D6C6C push  edx
.text:012D6C6D mov  eax, [ebp+var_48]
.text:012D6C70 push  eax
.text:012D6C71 lea  ecx, [ebp+var_1118]
.text:012D6C77 push  ecx
.text:012D6C78 push  0
.text:012D6C7A call  sub_12D6270
.text:012D6C7F add  esp, 14h
.text:012D6C82 mov  esi, esp
.text:012D6C84 push  0 ; lpThreadId
.text:012D6C86 push  0 ; dwCreationFlags
.text:012D6C88 push  0 ; lpParameter
.text:012D6C8A mov  edx, [ebp+lpStartAddress]
.text:012D6C8D push  edx ; lpStartAddress
.text:012D6C8E push  0 ; dwStackSize
.text:012D6C90 push  0 ; lpThreadAttributes
.text:012D6C92 call  ds:CreateThread
.text:012D6C98 cnp  esi, esp
.text:012D6C9A call  sub_12E10DC
.text:012D6C9F mov  esi, esp
.text:012D6CA1 push  eax ; hObject
.text:012D6CA2 call  ds:CloseHandle
.text:012D6CA8 cnp  esi, esp
.text:012D6CAA call  sub_12E10DC
.text:012D6CAF mov  eax, [ebp+var_48]
.text:012D6CB2 mov  [ebp+var_1124], eax
.text:012D6CB8 mov  ecx, [ebp+var_1124]
.text:012D6CBE push  ecx

```

Fig 5. Call to CreateThread()

In this payload code, it first loads the base address of kernel32 for PEB. The below code shows the loading of the address.

```

:0050CFFA 55                push    ebp
:0050CFE9 89 E5            mov     ebp, esp
:0050CFEB 83 EC 38        sub     esp, 38h
:0050CFEE 64 A1 30 00 00 00  mov     eax, large fs:30h
:0050CFF4 8B 40 0C        mov     eax, [eax+0Ch]
:0050CFF7 8B 40 14        mov     eax, [eax+14h]
:0050CFFA 8B 00          mov     eax, [eax]
:0050CFFC 8B 00          mov     eax, [eax]
:0050CFFE 8B 40 10        mov     eax, [eax+10h]
:0050D001 89 45 FC        mov     [ebp-4], eax
:0050D004 8B 45 FC        mov     eax, [ebp-4]
:0050D007 89 04 24        mov     [esp], eax
:0050D00A C7 44 24 04 AA FC 0D 7C  mov     dword ptr [esp+4], 7C0DFCAAh
:0050D012 E8 71 01 00 00  call   near ptr unk_58D188
:0050D017 83 EC 08        sub     esp, 8
:0050D01A 89 45 DC        mov     [ebp-24h], eax
:0050D01D 8B 45 FC        mov     eax, [ebp-4]
:0050D020 89 04 24        mov     [esp], eax

```

Fig 6. The address is loaded from PEB

The shellcode allocates memory using VirtualAlloc() and copies DLL file to newly allocated space. Then it creates a thread and executes code from DLL. This code changes bytes at the original entry point and then jump to OEP.

B. MAZE PAYLOAD

In decrypted payload, it first loads all the APIs and then does patching of dbgUiRemoteBreakin from ntdll.dll. It is one of the anti-debugging techniques it uses to avoid attachment of debugger.

First it calls VirtualProtect() on **dbgUiRemoteBreakin** with PAGE_EXECUTE_READWRITE as new flNewProtect. Then it replaces byte 6A with C3 by simple mov instruction. So, if someone tries to attach debugger it will get failed.

```

> 8D 44 24 04      lea    eax, [esp+4]
> C6 07 C3        mov    byte ptr [edi], 0C3h
> 50              push   eax
> FF 74 24 04     push  dword ptr [esp+4]
| 6A 01          push   1
> 57              push   edi
> 68 E2 21 1A 00  push  offset unk_1A2
> 0F 84 3B 67 00 00  jz    loc_1A88EA
> 75 04          jnz   short loc_1A21B5
| 11 17          adc    [edi], edx
;

```

Copy 0xC3 at
DbgUiRemoteBreakin
Entry point

Fig 7. Copy 0xC3 at dbgUiRemoteBreakin Entry point

<pre> 6A 08 ntdll_DbgUiRemoteBreakin proc near 68 E0 B8 8C 77 push 8 E8 4E E8 F8 FF push offset unk_778CB8E0 64 A1 18 00 00 00 call near ptr unk_778CDD64 88 40 30 mov eax, large fs:18h 80 78 02 00 mov eax, [eax+30h] 75 09 cmp byte ptr [eax+2], 0 F6 05 D4 02 FE 7F 02 jnz short loc_7793F52E 74 28 test byte_7FFE02D4, 2 jz short loc_7793F556 Original Byte 6A </pre>	<pre> 7793F50A C3 ntdll_DbgUiRemoteBreakin proc near 7793F50A retn 7793F50A nullsub_2 endp 7793F50A ; 7793F50A ;----- 7793F50B 08 db 8 7793F50C ; 7793F50C ;----- 7793F50C 68 E0 B8 8C 77 push offset unk_778CB8E0 7793F511 E8 4E E8 F8 FF call near ptr unk_778CDD64 7793F516 64 A1 18 00 00 00 mov eax, large fs:18h 7793F51C 8B 40 30 mov eax, [eax+30h] </pre>
---	--

After 6A byte is patched with C3

Fig 8. Code before and after patching

Then it enumerates running processes using Process32First() and process32Next(). It calls APIs using 'je' instruction and address is pushed onto the stack which is executed after API call. The call is replaced with 'push' and 'jz' or 'je' instruction.

```

;-----
68 85 3F 18 00      push     offset loc_183F85          ; Return Address called after API call
0F 84 3F 49 02 00   jz      loc_1A88AE                 ; Jmp to kernel32_Process32NextW
75 04      jnz     short near ptr unk_183F75
E2 05      loop   loc_183F78                 loc_1A88AE=[debug034:loc_1A88AE]
;-----
00      db      0
00      db      0
0F      unk_183F75 db 0Fh                 ; CODE XREF: debug034:00182F07↑j
85      db      85h ; 3                 ; debug034:loc_182F13↑j ...
33      db      33h ; 3                 ; offset kernel32_Process32NextW
;-----

```

Fig 9. Call to Process32NextW () using jz instruction

After process enumeration, it will obfuscate all the names with its algorithm which uses XMM registers. Then it calculates the hash of this obfuscated string which is then compared with some hardcoded hashes. Some of them are:

Procmon64.exe: 0x776E0635

Procexp64.exe: 0x78020640

Ida.exe: 0x33840485

Dumpcap.exe: 0x5FB805C5

X32dbg.exe: 0x5062053

```

001834F3 3D 3F 06 02 78      cmp     eax, 7802063Fh
001834F8 89 F5              mov     ebp, esi
001834FA 0F 8E 9B 04 00 00   jle    loc_18399B
00183500 3D 60 06 EC 79      cmp     eax, 79EC0660h
00183505 0F 8F FD 07 00 00   jg     loc_183D08
0018350B 3D 40 06 02 78      cmp     eax, 78020640h
00183510 0F 84 1A 08 00 00   jz     loc_183D30
00183516 75 04              jnz    short near ptr loc_18351B+1
00183518 5E                pop     esi

```

Fig 10: Compare hashes with running process hashes

When any of the process hash matches it calls TerminateProcess() and exits the running process.

It will not encrypt files for specific keyboard type. To get keyboard type it calls the function GetUserDefaultUILanguage(). For eg:

Russian : 0x419 // NOT Encrypt For this value

Ukrainian : 0x422 // NOT Encrypt For this value

Serbian : 0x7C1A // NOT Encrypt For this value

en_US : 0x409 // Encrypt For this value

```

0F B7 50 2E          movzx  edx, word ptr [eax+2Eh]
81 FA 19 04 00 00    cmp    edx, 419h
0F 84 64 0A 00 00    jz     loc_B853A
75 0A                jnz    short loc_B7AE2
FF 15 4C A0 0C 00    call   off_CA04C
04 21                add    al, 21h

```

Fig 11. Check value return by GetUserDefaultUILanguage()

Then It first communicates with CnC server where the IP list is hardcoded, all below mentioned IP seems to belong to Russia.

91.218.114.4

91.218.114.11

91.218.114.25

91.218.114.26

91.218.114.32

91.218.114.37

91.218.114.38

```

39 31 2E 32 31 38 2E 31 31 34 2E 34 0D 0A 39 31 91.218.114.4..91
2E 32 31 38 2E 31 31 34 2E 31 31 0D 0A 39 31 2E .218.114.11..91.
32 31 38 2E 31 31 34 2E 32 35 0D 0A 39 31 2E 32 218.114.25..91.2
31 38 2E 31 31 34 2E 32 36 0D 0A 39 31 2E 32 31 18.114.26..91.21
38 2E 31 31 34 2E 33 31 0D 0A 39 31 2E 32 31 38 8.114.31..91.218
2E 31 31 34 2E 33 32 0D 0A 39 31 2E 32 31 38 2E .114.32..91.218.
31 31 34 2E 33 37 0D 0A 39 31 2E 32 31 38 2E 31 114.37..91.218.1
31 34 2E 33 38 0D 0A 39 31 2E 32 31 38 2E 31 31 14.38..91.218.11
34 2E 37 37 0D 0A 39 31 2E 32 31 38 2E 31 31 34 4.77..91.218.114
2E 37 39 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 .79.....
00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00

```

Fig 12. Hardcoded Ip list

Then data is sent to CnC on the first request: Data which is sent is Username, Computername, OsVersion.

Malware create mutex with unique ID unique ID is created using SHA(GetComputerName() + VolumeID()) .

For the ransomware marker, it creates a unique file on root and each folder.

Maze Encryption Process:

Malware selects files for encryption based on the extension. It excludes the following extensions:

- Exe
- Dll
- Sys
- Ink

It also excludes the following files:

- Decrypt-Files.txt
- Autorun.inf
- Boot.ini
- Desktop.ini
- Temp/000.bmp

Excluded folders:

%windows%, @gaming%, %programdata%, %tor Brower%, %local Settings%, %appdata% etc

```
0F 85 13 01 00 00    jnz     loc_B1F8E
68 DC 81 0D 00      push   offset aLocalSettings    ; "\\Local Settings\\"
57                  push   edi
68 AA 1E 0B 00      push   offset loc_B1EAA
0F 84 BC 76 01 00    jz     loc_C9548
75 04              jnz    short loc_B1E92
```

Fig 13. Checking folder names and if the same found it will not encrypt the folder.

Encryption process:

It first creates key and then exports it in the "c:\programdata\data1.tmp" folder. Then it drops a ransom note in each folder before encryption. Later it will just import the key from this file and call "CryptEncrypt()".

It retrieves drive letters and then determine type of drive using GetDriveType(). Further it enumerates using API calls FindFirstFileA() and FindNextFileA().

It deletes shadow copy by creating a fake path for wmic and then calls delete recover by calling CreateProcessW()It encrypts files using CHA-CHA algorithm and the key of chacha is encrypted using RSA. For this, it uses crypto APIs. Encrypted files are having a marker at the end which is '66116166'.

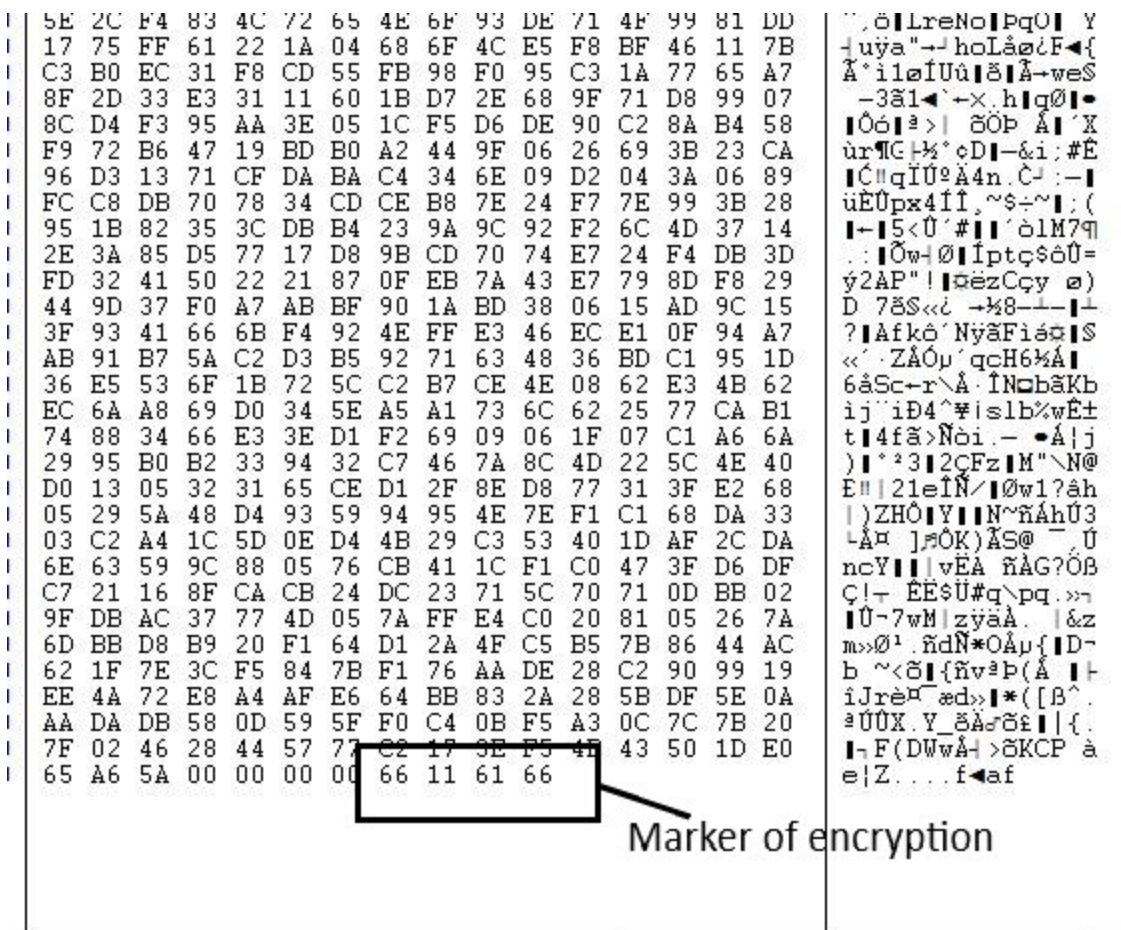


Fig 14. Encrypted File by Maze ransomware

It creates a thread for each drive, which then again call create thread function for each folder which does the encryption. Encryption will start from the root of C: or D: and parallelly it also accesses the shared drive by using WNetShareEnum() API. The same encryption function is used for encrypting shared drive files. The first folder which is encrypted is "\$Recycle Bin".

CreateThread() with following function for each folder. File is opened as follows. File is encrypted by calling CryptEncrypt() and it is renamed by calling moveFileEx() with extension.

Encrypted File:

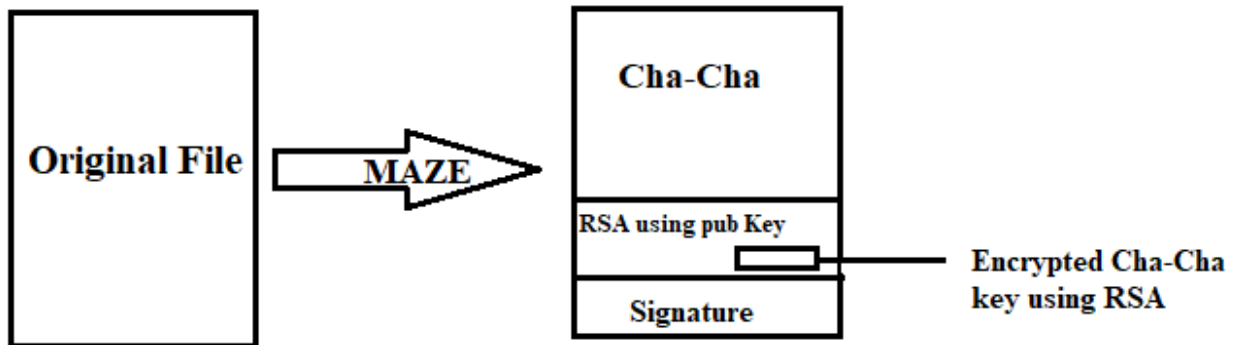


Fig 15. File After encryption

Maze Malware uses many tactics for anti-Analysis:

- APIs are resolved at runtime.
- Indirect calling of API & functions using JE & JNE instructions.
- Patching DbgUiRemoteTracking to avoid attaching of debugger at runtime.
- Checking being debugged flag.
- Checking for VM.
- Checks RAM & hardware size by using API – GlobalMemoryStatusEx & GetDiskeSpaceW.
- Check process names by calculating its hashes.

Prevention measures to stay away from ransomware

Common infection vectors used by Maze Ransomware are phishing emails with MS Office attachments and fake/phishing websites laced with Exploit Kits. Hence, we advise our end users to exercise caution while handling emails from unknown sources, downloading MS Office attachments, enabling macros, and clicking on suspicious links.

Indicators of compromise

49B28F16BA496B57518005C813640EEB

BD9838D84FD77205011E8B0C2BD711E0

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