Opening the "Private Browsing" Data – Acquiring Evidence of Browsing Activities

Rodrigo de S. Ruiz ¹, Fernando Pompeo Amatte, Kil Jin Brandini Park D. Sc. ³ 1 Malware Analysis Nucleus (NUCAM) Renato Archer Information Technology Center(CTI) Campinas – SP, Brazil. 2 Independent Researcher, Campinas – SP, Brazil. 3 Computer Faculty (FACOM) –Federal University of Uberlândia Monte Carmelo – MG, Brazil rodrigosruiz@outlook.com, <u>famatte@gmail.com</u>, kil@facom.ufu.br

Abstract — The growing concern of users about the confidentiality of data generated by web browsing activities made browser developers include options for safer and confidential browsing in their products.

For users those options, when functionally compliant with data security guidelines, guarantee online privacy. For law enforcement agents, this functionality introduces another obstacle for data acquisition towards evidence gathering.

No matter which case, it is important to assess and validate private browsing techniques.

The presented method shows that for some browsers it is possible to recover text and graphical data related to pages visited during private navigation, in clear violation of this tool basic functional requirement.

Keywords: Private browsing, Browser safety, Browser forensics.

1 INTRODUCTION

The growing concern of users with the confidentiality of the data generated by the activities developed in the course of navigation through web pages fostered the development of navigation options that offer greater degree of security and confidentiality of the data.

The promise of the developers regarding the operation of this feature is to prevent others to reconstruct the steps the user took during his online activities.

On Mozilla's page we found this commercial text about privacy and private browsing:

"Sometimes it's nice to go undercover: Open a private window and protect your browsing history. You can switch between private and normal windows quickly, so it's easy to go back to what you were doing before. This feature is great if you're doing your online banking on a shared computer or checking email from an Internet café." [1]

On Chrome's browser, when the user enable incognito mode, the new tab opened displays the following message:

"You came in incognito mode. Pages you view in this window will not appear in your browser history or search history will **not leave other traces**, like cookies, on your computer after you close all incognito windows open. However, all the downloads you make or bookmarks you create will be preserved."

On Safari's page we found this commercial text about privacy and private browsing:

"...Safari can keep your browsing history private. When you turn on Private Browsing, Safari does not remember the pages you visited, your search history, or your AutoFill information..."[2]

On IE's page we found this commercial text about privacy and private browsing:

"While you are surfing the web using InPrivate Browsing, Internet Explorer stores some information-such as cookies and temporary Internet filesso the webpages you visit will work correctly. However, at the end of your InPrivate Browsing session, this information is discarded..."[3] On the one hand such a feature, if operating perfectly aligned with security guidelines, provides the user privacy in their online activities, on the other hand it is clear that in case of unlawful behavior, law enforcement officers have to deal with this layer of protection to obtain the necessary data to provide evidence during the course of an investigation.

In both cases, it is important to verify the actual functionality of such a feature, if available implementations actually provide the degree of confidentiality offered, or if there are flaws that allow the retrieval of online activity data.

This paper is an extended version of a work previously presented by the authors [4], with additional results and analysis, and is structured in the following topics:

Method and Tests, which presents the method applied to tests performed in various browsers with the private browsing feature enabled.

Results and Discussion, which presents the results obtained by the tests adopted and discusses these results.

Finally, follow the conclusions, further studies and references used.

2 METHOD AND TESTS

When testing a security feature, it is necessary to define its functional requirements and the profile of the attacker who will try to disable or override this feature.

In a paper on the analysis of private browsing functionality, [5] lists the profiles of potential attackers, security models to be checked and the objectives to be met by browsers that implement private browsing. In this work, we start from the methodological framework presented by [5], for the construction of the following methodological model:

The profile of the attacker considered assumes that he has local access to the user machine. Consequently, attempts to circumvent the system of private browsing will occur from an image taken from the user's machine hard drive. As the focus of the evaluation is the private browsing feature, we considered that the user does not adopt other security tools or techniques that could exert influence on the access of the data generated during navigation. Thus, we did not conduct any test with the adoption of cryptographic methods in the disk of the user's machine.

Furthermore, this paper focus on searching the user's machine for fragments of data from which text or images that brings information about pages visited could be extracted. Therefore, the specific analysis of changes to files used by browsers such as history, cookies, cache and certificates was not performed. Such analysis can be found in [5] and [6].

We tested Internet Explorer browser on bare metal hardware with the use of four notebooks equipped with Windows 7 Pro SP1.

For the other tests performed, we created a standard guest virtual machine - with the operating system Windows 7 Pro - in the host operating system - Windows 7 Pro - using the virtualization software Virtual Box [7].

An export (snapshot) of the newly installed Windows machine was created, considering the possible need for future comparison of the base guest machine with guest machines running the different browsers tested.

The browsers tested were Internet Explorer 10, Firefox 24.0_1, Google Chrome 30.0.159969M_1 and Safari 5.1.7_1. The base guest virtual machine for each browser was replicated 4 times, each to be used in the four different tests performed on each browser.

Based on those configurations, four different tests for each browser in private browsing mode were applied:

Test S (Shutdown): Consists of visiting a web site available on the internet, making operations to interact with the site, finish the execution of the browser correctly and generating the virtual machine image for analysis.

Test F (Freeze): Consists of visiting a web site available on the Internet, making operations to interact with the site and with the browser still active, generating the virtual machine image for analysis.

Test K (Kill process): Consists of visiting a web site available on the internet, making operations to interact with the site, requesting that the operating system interrupt the browser execution and generating the virtual machine image for analysis.

Test P (Power down): Consists of visiting a web site available on the internet, making operations to interact with the site, requesting the virtualizer to turn off the virtual machine - simulating a power outage - generating the virtual machine image for analysis.

For each test performed, the virtual machine image generated will be analyzed through the application of the program strings [8] found in many different Linux distributions.

This program is used for the search of strings inside the virtual machine images that could present relation to the webpage visited.

The images of the virtual machines will be analyzed for the search of graphic files associated with the visited webpage, through the usage of the foremost program [9], a renowned forensic tool for extraction of files - "data carving" - of different formats.

This tool works as follows: It reads a block of data - memory, disk or files - and looks for signatures related to files of well-known formats. It is noteworthy that in the present research we investigated only the persistent memory (i.e. physical and virtual disk).

Since these signatures are a sequence of bytes, there is the chance of occurrence of false positives and therefore the capture of incorrect file.

Furthermore, it is important to note that there exist several known problems associated with the use of tools aiming for "data carving", for example, limitations to the treatment of noncontiguous data. Thus, it is possible that an image whose sequence of bytes is dispersed will not be fully recovered, despite its possible existence in the block of data analyzed.

The WinHex tool was also used to search for keywords found in the navigated webpage.

3 RESULTS

Aiming to simulate an actual visit to any website available on the internet, a random

selection was made, and the site chosen for the experiment was the [10]. Since some site information is proprietary, the figures recovered during the test will be only partially reproduced in the present work. We would like to acknowledge that those information are copyright of their respective owners.

SAFARI Browser

For the Safari browser, the following results were obtained:

F test (freeze)

01196070	88	10	7E	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00,	1	N					
01196080	14	00	00	14	84	2B	02	00	F8	59	7D	01	88	50	7D	01			1+	ø	₹}	1E	?}
01196090	74	00	6F	00	72	00	61	00	67	00	65	00	2E	00	64	00	t	0	r a	g	e		d
011960A0	69	00	73	00	63	00	6F	00	76	00	65	00	72	00	79	00	i	s	c c	v	e	r	y
011960B0	2E	00	63	00	6F	00	6D	00	2E	00	65	00	64	00	67	00		с	0 1		e	d	g
011960C0	65	00	73	00	75	00	69	00	74	00	65	00	2E	00	6E	00	e	s	u i	t	e		n
011960D0	65	00	74	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	e	t					
011960E0	08	00	00	08	8E	2B	02	00	38	1À	7E	01	38	4D	7B	00			1+	8	~	81	1(
011960F0	74	00	6F	00	72	00	61	00	67	00	65	00	2E	00	64	00	t	0	r a	g	е		d
01196100	69	00	73	00	63	00	6F	00	76	00	65	00	72	00	79	00	i	s	c o	v	e	r	y
01196110	2E	00	63	00	6F	00	6D	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	4	С	0 1				
01196120	06	00	01	07	98	2B	02	14	FF	FF	FF	FF	FF	FF	FF	FF			1+	ÿ	ÿÿÿ	iyy	ÿÿ
01196130	05	00	04	00	09	30	00	00	68	00	00	00	01	00	00	00			0	h			
01196140	58	11	7E	01	0A	6E	65	74	73	74	6F	72	61	67	65	09	X	~	ne	ts	top	rag	e
01196150	12	00	00	12	Å2	2B	02	00	18	D2	7B	00	58	16	7E	01	1		0+		ò{	X	N
01196160	25	nn	67	00	25	nn	61	00	6R	00	61	nn	60	nn	61	0.0		~		ŀ		*	ъ.
Figure 1	66,	~ t o	10	~		00		0.10		0.00	. ??	at.	ni m	~ l	0	nt.	~4	•	n				

Figure 1- "storage.discovery.com" string located in virtual machine's image.

No image fragments were found on the virtual machine's hard disk image.

K Test (kill process)

07159660	68	6C	6D	00	6E	00	35	00	67	00	2E	00	61	00	6B	00	1			Ę.				1.
07159670	08	00	00	08	47	87	00	00	D8	BE	6A	00	B8	17	6Å	00			G	1	Ø	4j	,	j
07159680	61	00	6C	00	2E	00	64	00	69	00	73	00	63	00	6F	00	a	1		d	i	s	с	0
07159690	76	00	65	00	72	00	79	00	2E	00	63	00	6F	00	6D	00	v	e	r	y		с	0	n
071596A0	00	00	00	02	47	87	00	00	38	4B	6Å	00	08	31	64	00			G	1	81	(j	1	j
071596B0	06	00	01	07	7D	87	00	14	FF			}1	i.	ÿ	799	, yyy	yy							
071596C0	01	00	04	00	0B	20	00	00	7F	00	00	00	01	00	00	00								

Figure 2- "discovery.com" string located in virtual machine's image.

Images related to the webpage visited were found on the virtual machine hard disk image analysis:



Figure 3 – Image recovered on hard disk image analysis and found on Discovery.com website.

The strings utility could also recover text references in the virtual machine hard disk image analysis that indicated the webpage was visited:

p://dsc.discovery.com/videos

http://store.discovery.com/?ecid=PRF-DSC-101345&pa=PRF-DSC-101345

P Test (Power down)

Images related to the webpage visited were found on the virtual machine hard disk image analysis:



Figure 4 –Image recovered on hard disk image analysis and found on Discovery.com website.

The strings utility could also recover text references in the virtual machine hard disk image analysis that indicated the webpage was visited:

http://store.discovery.com/discovery/layout/favicon.ico http://dsc.discovery.com/ http://games.dsc.discovery.com/ http://dsc.discovery.com/tv-shows http://store.discovery.com/discovery/layout/favicon.ico

S Test (Shutdown)

Images related to the webpage visited were found on the virtual machine hard disk image analysis:



Figure 5 – Image recovered on hard disk image analysis and found on Discovery.com website.

The strings utility could also recover text references in the virtual machine hard disk image analysis that indicated the webpage was visited:

http://dsc.discovery.com/tv-shows http://dsc.discovery.com/ http://store.discovery.com/discovery/layout/favicon.ico http://dsc.discovery.com/videos america.discovery.com.edgesuite.net velocity.discovery.com metrics.discovery.com orate.discovery.com animal.discovery.com.edgesuite.net The results obtained for the Safari browser tests are grouped in table 1:

Table 1 – 1	Results for	r Safari Br	owser	
	F Test	K Test	P Test	S Test
Page address recover	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Picture recover	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

FIREFOX browser:

F Test (freeze)

																-			
OF	00	00	AO	00	00	01	21	3F	20	02	E2	00	7F	00	70		17	â	P
A2	7F	1F	73	63	2E	64	69	73	63	6F	76	65	72	79	2E	¢s	c.dis	cove	ery.
63	6F	6D	2F	76	69	64	65	6F	2D	74	6F	70	69	63	73	con/	video	-top	oics
2F	61	64	07	76	65	6E	74	75	72	65	00	42	7F	03	1Å	/ad	ventu	re E	3
FO	3E	6D	40	7F	00	DO	EO	0B	7F	20	6B	02	58	6F	EA	ð>m@	Đà	k	Xoê
60	7F	00	FO	AO	7F	00	80	20	13	AO	7E	EO	01	7F	03			-	_

Figure 6 – "sc.discovery.com/video-topics" string located in the virtual machine's image.

No images related to the webpage visited were found on the virtual machine hard disk image analysis.

K Test (kill process)

74	69	6D	69	7Å	65	6C	79	42	75	63	6B	65	74	73	2E	timizelyBuckets.
64	69	73	63	6F	76	65	72	79	2E	63	6F	6D	2F	7D	2Å	discovery.com/}*
09	07	33	29	OF	08	08	01	6F	70	74	AO	28	08	45	6E	3) opt (En
64	55	73	65	72	49	64	EO	06	2Å	03	09	29	07	31	EO	dUserIdà *) 1à
06	2Å	05	53	65	67	6D	65	6E	EO	08	54	04	7C	1B	07	* Segmenà T
10	nг	4.0	Π.	11	C IC	ГF:	75	71	CD	71	25	(D	15	71	10	*/@T

Figure 7 – "discovery.com" string located in the virtual machine's image.

Images related to the webpage visited were found on the virtual machine hard disk image analysis:



Figure 8 – Image recovered on hard disk image analysis and found on Discovery.com website.

The strings utility could also recover text references in the virtual machine hard disk image analysis that indicated the webpage was visited: C:\Program Files\Mozilla Firefox\firefox.exe ttp://games.dsc.discovery.com/ /ttp://dsc.discovery.com/videos http://games.dsc.discovery.com/word-games http://games.dsc.discovery.com/sport-games https://securestore.discovery.com/cart.php https://securestore.discovery.com/cart.php store.discovery.com http://games.dsc.d

P Test (Power down)

Images related to the webpage visited were found on the virtual machine hard disk image analysis:



Figure 9 – Image recovered on hard disk image analysis and found on Discovery.com website.

The strings utility could also recover text references in the virtual machine hard disk image analysis that indicates the webpage was visited:

investigation.discovery.com.edgesuite.net netstorage.discovery.com.edgesuite.net netstorage.discovery.com netstorage.discovery.com.edgesuite.net netstorage.discovery.com.edgesuite.net netstorage.discovery.com.edgesuite.net games.dsc.discovery.com

S Test (Shutdown)

Images related to the webpage visited were found on the virtual machine hard disk image analysis:



Figure 10 – Image recovered on hard disk image analysis and found on Discovery.com website.

The strings utility could also recover text references in the virtual machine hard disk image analysis that indicated the webpage was visited. A fraction of strings retrieved in this test follows: *Fdsc.discovery.com%2Fvideotopics%2Fadventure&u=oeu1381760545360r0.43558277 74372748&wxhr=true&t=1381760579498&f=34093708 6*

http://dsc.discovery.com/

Table 2 – Results for Fire Fox Brows

	F Test	K Test	P Test	S Test
Page address recover	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Picture recover	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

GOOGLE CHROME Browser

F Test (freeze)

Some strings related to the webpage were also found in hard disk analysis:

6C 40	1F 1A 6	68 74 74	70 3A 2	2F 2F 64 73	3 63 2E 64	l@ http://dsc.d
69 73	63 6F 3	76 65 72	79 2E 6	63 6F 6D 21	F 00 31 20	iscovery.com/ 1
3D 0E	00 00 3	76 D2 8C	F8 D6 4	4D B5 F9 E	0 75 77 07	 vÒløÖMµùàuw
BA A2	1F 00 0	04 20 17	00 06 2	20 03 40 00	0 07 F6 71	2¢ @ öq
0B F9	36 EC 8	8B F8 E0	09 3F /	AO OO O7 70	C 3B 6F 68	ù6ì]øà ? ;oh
A0 0C	6F 29 2	20 OE 08	91 D2 7	71 6E 90 69	9 64 00 03	o) 'Oqn id
20 OB	02 74 6	69 6F 60	B7 E0 1	11 7F 80 1H	F 0C D6 D2	tio`a ÖÒ
8C F8	56 1E (03 F9 A0	4A 70 0	07 AD 20 71	F 40 E7 01	løV ù Jp − @ç
8C E8	E0 01 H	BF 17 76	87 F1 H	F5 76 02 40	8 F9 6F 6C	èà ¿ v∣ñõv Hùol
21 22		AD 24 20	10 00 1	10 10 DA 11		100 111 11

Figure 11- "http://dsc.discovery.com" string located in the virtual machine's image.

						10						~~	~~	~		
65	3D	22	45	6D	75	6C	61	74	65	49	45	38	22	3E	64	e="EmulatelE8">d
69	72	65	63	74	67	65	73	74	69	6F	6E	2E	63	6F	6D	ilectyestion.com
3C	2F	64	6F	6D	61	69	6E	3E	0D	0A	20	20	20	20	30	<
64	6F	6D	61	69	6E	3E	64	69	73	63	61	73	2E	6E	65	domain>discas.ne
74	3C	2F	64	6F	6D	61	69	6E	3E	0D	0A	20	20	20	20	t
3C	64	6F	6D	61	69	6E	3E	64	69	73	63	6F	76	65	72	<domain>discover</domain>
79	2E	63	6F	6D	3C	2F	64	6F	6D	61	69	6E	3E	0D	0A	y.com
20	20	20	20	3C	64	6F	6D	61	69	6E	3E	64	69	73	63	<domain>disc</domain>
75	7A	2E	6E	65	74	3C	2F	64	6F	6D	61	69	6E	3E	0D	uz.net
0A	20	20	20	20	3C	64	6F	6D	61	69	6E	3E	64	69	78	<domain>dix</domain>
6F	6E	73	2E	63	6F	2E	75	6B	3C	2F	64	6F	6D	61	69	one on uk//domai

Figure 12- "discovery.com< /domain>" string located in the virtual machine's image.

K Test (kill process)

66	75	6C	6C	79	51	75	61	6C	69	66	69	65	64	55	52	fullyQualifiedUR
4C	3A	22	68	74	74	70	3A	2F	2F	64	73	63	1F	2E	64	L: "http://dsc .d
69	73	63	6F	76	65	72	79	2E	63	6F	6D	2F	74	76	2D	iscovery.com/tv-
73	68	6F	77	73	2F	73	75	72	76	69	76	6F	72	03	6D	shows/survivor m
61	6E	2F	60	5E	0B	73	2F	62	75	72	6E	2D	62	61	62	an/`^ s/burn-bab
79	2D	40	09	11	2E	68	74	6D	22	2C	64	75	72	61	74	v-@ .htm",durat

Figure 13 – "discovery.com/tv-shows" string located in the virtual machine's image.

Images related to the webpage visited were found on the virtual machine hard disk image analysis:



Figure 14 – Image recovered on hard disk image analysis and found on Discovery.com website.



Figure 15 – Image recovered on hard disk image analysis and found on Discovery.com website.

P Test (Power down)

Images related to the webpage visited were found on the virtual machine hard disk image analysis:



Figure 16 – Image recovered on hard disk image analysis and found on Discovery.com website.

The strings utility could also recover text references in the virtual machine hard disk image analysis that indicated the webpage was visited. A fraction of strings retrieved in this test follows:

//dsc.discovery.com/

://static.ak.facebook.com/connect/xd_arbiter.php?vers ion=27#cb=fdde13148&domain=dsc.discovery.com&ori gin=http%3A%2F%2Fdsc.discovery.com%2Ff2a7e0cd34 &relation=parent&error=unknown_user /dsc.discovery.com/tv-shows ://dsc.discovery.com/ ://dsc.discovery.com/ ://dsc.discovery.com/ http://dsc.discovery.com/tv-shows http://dsc.discovery.com/tv-shows http://dsc.discovery.com/

S Test (Shutdonw)

Images related to the webpage visited were found on the virtual machine hard disk image analysis:



Figure 17 - Image recovered on hard disk image analysis and found on Discovery.com website.

The strings utility could also recover text references in the virtual machine hard disk image analysis that indicated the webpage was visited. A fraction of strings retrieved in this test follows:

":"Survivorman Videos", "srtUrl":"", "uuid":"8e18dcd9-8d1d-11e2-a7b7-06a90ff35868", "bdat":"must watch", "keywords": "survivorman, 10 days, ten, days, must watch, mexico, tiburon, deserted, island, les stroud, survival, survivor, man, water, pool, algae, fresh, cane , reed, sludge", "mediaType": "lift", "mp4":[{"bitrate": "110 k", "src": "http://discsmil.edgesuite.net/digmed/hdnet/07/a 7/13776400801197_102MissingPiece-110k.mp4"]f.akamaihd.net/i/digmed/hdnet/98/9a/137764

01201197_104Stove-

,400k,110k,200k,600k,800k,1500k,3500k,.mp4.csmil/mast er.m3u8","networkId":"DSC","thumbnailURL":"http://ne tstorage.discovery.com/feeds/brightcove/asset-

thumbnails/dsc/0a5dbdfa893fec1f556a7d81c5b28bc470e cbb0e_0a5dbdfa893fec1f556a7d81c5b28bc470ecbb0e.jp g"

Table 3 – Results for Chrome Browser

	F Test	K Test	P Test	S Test
Page address recover	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Picture recover	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

INTERNET EXPLORER Browser

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F Test (freeze)

60	DE	B2	0A	10	D5	7C	0A	35	00	33	00	41	00	25	00	1	þ2	Č	51	5	3	Å	%
32	00	35	00	32	00	46	00	25	00	32	00	35	00	32	00	2	5	2	F	%	2	5	2
46	00	64	00	73	00	63	00	2E	00	64	00	69	00	73	00	F	d	s	c		d	i	s
63	00	6F	00	76	00	65	00	72	00	79	00	2E	00	63	00	c	0	v	e	r	у		c
6F	00	6D	00	25	00	32	00	35	00	32	00	46	00	66	00	0	n	%	2	5	2	F	f
32	00	32	00	61	00	33	00	35	00	38	00	33	00	33	00	2	2	a	3	5	8	3	3
31	00	32	00	34	00	33	00	36	00	32	00	25	00	32	00	1	2	4	3	6	2	%	2

Figure 18 – "discovery.com" string located in the virtual machine's image.

No images related to the webpage visited were found on the virtual machine hard disk image analysis.

K Test(kill process)

OC 00 01 01 87 00 04 01 B2 00 01 68 00 74 00 74 ² htt н //stor 00 70 00 3A 00 2F 00 2F 00 73 00 74 00 6F 00 72 00 65 00 2E 00 64 00 69 00 73 00 63 00 6F 00 76 00 65 00 72 00 79 00 2E 00 63 00 6F 00 6D 00 2F discov e erv com/ 00 6A 00 73 00 2F 00 61 00 6A 00 61 00 78 00 2F jax/ is/ 00 61 00 6A 00 61 00 78 00 44 00 65 00 74 00 61 ajaxD eta 00 69 00 6C 00 2D 00 31 00 2E 00 32 00 2E 00 6A il - 1 . 2 00 73 00 3F 00 76 00 65 00 72 00 3D 00 31 00 30 s?ver=10

Figure 19– "http://store.discovery.com/js/ajax/" string located in the virtual machine's image.

No images related to the webpage visited were found on the virtual machine hard disk image analysis.

P Test (Power down)

Images related to the webpage visited were found on the virtual machine hard disk image analysis:



Figure 20 – Image recovered on hard disk image analysis and found on Discovery.com website.

S Test (Shutdown)

On this test, another step taken was the analysis of log files generated by the Internet Explorer browser. It is easy to see that the page address is easily visible inside a log file:

V0100016 - Bloco de notas Arquivo Editar Formatar Exibir Ajuda X-ClientErrorCode: ItemDoesNotExist X-Throwsite: 5433.1999 0d on L° n ¬∥|€? ñ oFÙB=£ÉÎ -n 8 q€j 17 18 18 ä тd ñ Ud Access-Control-Allow-Credentials: true Access-Control-Allow-Methods: POST, GET Access-Control-Allow-Methods: POST, GET Access-Control-Allow-Origin: http://dsc.discovery.com Content-Type: application/json P3P: CP="IDC DSP COR CURA ADMA OUR IND PHY ONL COM STA" 3 A % 2 F 4 gd fd = 1 3 6 6 x 7 6 ¿10rm]œ50€ L agma: pc L 🎧 🔵 🗢 📕 « usuario 🕨 AppData 🕨 Local 🕨 + ∠10rmj@SD€ 4 Pragma: no-cache X-Content-Type-Opt Content-Type: imag Content-Length: 35 Alternate-Protocol Abrir 🔻 Organizar 🔻 Compartilhar co Nome ☆ Favoritos 📃 Área de Trabalho V01.chk -# # ¶´ ¤-Pragma: no-cache P3P: policyref="ht X-Proc-data: pd0-b Content-Type: appl Transfer-Encoding: 01 V01 L Downloads V01res00001.jrs 🖳 Locais V01res00002.jrs V0100013 词 Bibliotecas Documentos V0100014

Figure 21 – Log file found using only the explorer and notepad. They demonstrate the system failure (string <u>http://dsc.discovery.com</u> found) in the private-IE10.

	F Test	K Test	P Test	S Test
Page address recovery	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Picture recovery	No	No	Yes	No

Further analysis to prospect the files and directories involved in the data leakage generated the following results:

In all browsers, some of the data associated with the navigation could be extracted from the file pagefile.sys. This proves that part of the data is leaking through the paging process's storage mechanism used by the operating system.

In Internet Explorer's case, more data could be found in a file located at the directory:

\user\<username>\appdata\local\microsoft\wi ndows\temporary internet files\low\content_ie5\ndm414gy\

 $files \low \content.ie5 \ndm4l4gv \low \content.ie5 \ndm5l4gv \low \content.ie5 \ndm$

On Chrome's case, more data could be found in the file:

 $\label{eq:local_locad_$

Those files points to the fact that navigation data is leaking from cache files used by the browsers.

4 DISCUSSION

From the data generated by the tests, it is possible to assume that every implementation of the private browsing functionality in all browsers tested demonstrate some type of failure.

In some cases, those flaws allow an attacker to identify the pages visited by the user. In other cases, they generate enough data to allow the partial reconstruction of the pages visited.

We contact the developers about the results and obtained some mixed comments.

Microsoft answer to our request for comment:

```
"...We do encourage security
researchers we are working with to
present their research at events...
...The issue is still being scoped
and researched. I will let you know
once that has finished and a servicing
decision has been made"
```

From the information about the private browsing functionality and the answers received, it is possible to extract that the average user is not well informed of the limitations inherent to the implementations of the service.

5 CONCLUSION

In all four types of tests performed, it is possible to verify that all browsers tested presented flaws in their private browsing feature.

Those flaws generates data that remains available in the system and allow not only the identification of pages visited but in some cases also to partially rebuild them.

Browsers promises to leave no traces of the navigation activities of users. This work proves that privacy as advertised is not provided.

In face of the results obtained, we would like to recommend the developers to explicitly alert the users about the limitations of the private browsing functionality implementation. We would like to praise Microsoft's answer because they both acknowledged the information received and approved the release of the study.

If on one hand this is a negative point for the user, on the other hand those flaws facilitate the work of law enforcers in cases where there is need for the data related to the navigation activity.

6 FURTHER STUDIES

In future researches, we plan to analyze the mechanisms and data structures - both browser and operating system related - involved in the browsing activities data leakage in-depth. This line of study could bring forth new techniques to avoid the problems presented in this paper on the implementations of the private browsing functions.

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