

“White collar” Attacks on Web Services and Grids

Grid Security threats analysis and Grid Security Incident data model definition

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1. Goals

- 1) Analyse specifics of the Grid Security Incident (GSInc) based on generic Web Services threats analysis, and
- 2) Define general requirements to GSInc description format and suggested extensions of the emerging format for the security Incidents description IODEF

2. Grid Security Incident definition

2.1 Classical definition of Incident

1) A computer/ITC security incident is defined as any real or suspected adverse event in relation to the security of a computer or computer network. Typical security incidents within the ITC area are: a computer intrusion, a denial-of-service attack, information theft or data manipulation, etc.

An incident can be defined as a single attack or a group of attacks that can be distinguished from other attacks by the method of attack, identity of attackers, victims, sites, objectives or timing, etc.

2) An Incident in general is defined as a security event that involves a security violation. This may be an event that violates a security policy, UAP, laws and jurisdictions, etc.

A security incident may be logical, physical or organisational, for example a computer intrusion, loss of secrecy, information theft, fire or an alarm that doesn't work properly. A security incident may be caused on purpose or by accident. The latter may be if somebody forgets to lock a door or forgets to activate an access list in a router.

2.2. Incident – any specifics for Grid?

In general, Grid systems will be susceptible to all typical network and computer security threats/attacks but Grid specifics will bring new range/types of threats, first of all, inherited from XML web Services which extensive analysis is conducted in the next section.

XML/SOAP based Request messages often convey application specific commands as XML elements' content. In this way, Grid and/or Web Services will expose all existing vulnerabilities in back-end/legacy applications and may provide a channel to bypass local vulnerabilities and viruses' security checks for these applications. This is a challenge for both Web Services and applications developers.

Specific Security Incident definition for Grids will be based on general Security Incident definition and:

1) *will depend on:*

- the scope and range of the Security Policy, ULA, or SLA,

2) *should be based on:*

- threats analysis and vulnerabilities model
- Grid processes/workflow analysis

3) *should be distinguished from incidents related to the underlying networking infrastructure.*

3. XML Web Services threats analysis

3.1. Generic XML Web Services threats/attacks classes

XML Web Services threats/attacks can be classified in the following way:

- Web Service interface (WSDL) probing
WSDL as an advertising mechanism for web services describes the methods and parameters used to access a specific Web Services, and in this way exposes Web Service to possible attacks
- Brute force attack on XML parsing system
XML parsing is a resource and time consuming process. Many real world applications may allow complex or voluminous XML files what may overload XML parsing system
- Malicious Content
XML documents may contain malicious parsing or processing instructions (XML Schema extensions, XPath or XQuery instructions, XSLT instructions, etc) that may alter XML parsing process, or malicious content that may carry threats to the back-end applications or hosting environment (application specific commands with the malicious code addressing known vulnerabilities in applications, e.g. buffer overflow, Unicode based vulnerabilities, etc.)
- External Reference attacks
This group is based on the generic ability of XML to include references to external documents or data types. Poor configuration, or improper use of external resources can be readily exploited by hackers to create DoS scenarios or information theft.
- SOAP/XML Protocol attacks
SOAP messaging infrastructure operates on top of network transport protocols, uses similar services for delivering and routing SOAP messages, and therefore can be susceptible to typical network/infrastructure based attacks like Denial of Service (DoS), replay or man-in-the-middle attacks.
- Underlying transport protocol attacks
These are actually not related to XML Web Services but directly affecting reliability of SOAP communications.

3.2. Web Services interface (WSDL) probing

1) WSDL Scanning

Web Services Description Language (WSDL) as an advertising mechanism for web services describes the methods and parameters used to access a specific Web Services, and in this way exposes Web Services to possible attacks. In addition, the information provided in a WSDL file may allow an attacker to guess at other methods. For example, a service that offers stock quoting and trading services may advertise query methods like requestStockQuote, however also includes an unpublished transactional method such as tradeStockQuote. It is simple for a persistent hacker to cycle thru method string combinations in order to discover unintentionally related or unpublished application programming interfaces. Another possible scenario to overpass AuthN/AuthZ system can be derived from the analysis of the security tokens exchange by using replay techniques (this kind of exploits is also related to the next Parameter tampering threat).

Additional threat is imposed by automatic generation of the access code without checking WSDL for possible exploits that may be inserted into requestor's system.

2) WSDL Parameter Tampering

Parameters are used to convey client-specific information to the Web service in order to execute a specific remote operation. Since instructions on how to use parameters are explicitly described within a WSDL document, malicious users can play around with different parameter options in order to retrieve unauthorized internal system information, gain unauthorised access, or bypass security checks. For example, by probing Web Service with specially constructed messages an Attacker can receive error messages from the different components of XML Request processing system and guess on the internal systems structure. By submitting special characters or unexpected content to the Web service can cause a denial of service condition or illegal access to protected resources. An attacker can embed, for example, command line code into a document that is parsed by an application that can create a command shell to execute the command.

3.3. Attacks on XML parsing system

Attacks on XML parsing system are also called *Coercive Parsing*. XML processing software is a necessary component of the native XML Web Services applications or Web Services enabling middleware connecting non-XML legacy applications. This component of Web Services applications is susceptible to XML based attacks whose main objective is either to overwhelm the processing capabilities of the system or install malicious mobile code.

3) *Recursive XML document (payload) content*

One of the strengths of XML is its ability to nest elements within a document to address the need for complex relationships among elements. The value is easy to see with forms that have a form with many different elements, such as a purchase order that incorporates shipping and billing addresses as well as various items and quantities ordered. XML documents (and consequently XML Schema) providing this possibility normally will allow multiple elements and recursive nesting which are generally not limited in number and depth. An attacker can easily create a document that attempts to stress and break an XML parser that contains 10,000 or 100,000 elements with complex hierarchy of nested elements.

4) *Oversized XML documents/payloads*

XML can wrap up any type of data including multimedia or binary data. It is verbose by design in its markup of existing data and information. File size limits must be setup high (up to hundreds of megabytes or gigabytes in size) or not limited at all. So, it gives an attacker a possibility to execute a denial-of-service attack by overloading parser. Parsers based on the DOM model are especially susceptible to this attack given its need to model the entire document in memory prior to parsing

3.4. Malicious XML Content

5) *Malicious code exploiting known vulnerabilities in applications*

In many implementations XML/SOAP messages transfer command calls to back-end applications. In these cases, malicious code conveyed as XML content can target such vulnerabilities as buffer overflow, Unicode based vulnerabilities, etc.

6) *Viruses, or Trojan horse programs*

Legacy or just non-XML applications using Web Service front-end interface can be exposed to the same attacks as in direct access. Viruses, or Trojan horse programs, being transmitted within otherwise valid XML messages can bypass normal virus scan protecting an application from direct attacks. Binary attachments such as images, executables, and application-specific documents can all be modified to cause exceptions within the Web Service application.

7) *Malicious XPath or XQuery built-in operations*

Often XML documents use rich XPath or XQuery instructions format to define some required operations on the content. Such operations can combine few components into one, alter another content before sending it to application what may allow for malicious code or content to bypass direct security checks. Theoretically, this exploit may be used to manipulate security tokens inside one document between legitimate/authorized content and unauthorized or malicious one.

8) *SQL Injection*

Database front-end XML parsers are aimed at native database languages in the same fashion as SQL injection. SQL injection could allow an attacker to execute multiple commands in an input field by using native command separators like ';' or pipes. This capability may allow an attacker to illegitimacy retrieve, update or insert information in the database.

3.5. External Reference Attacks

This group of threats can be also added to the malicious content group but for further Intrusion prevention analysis it is better to be grouped separately. This group is based on the generic ability of XML to include references to external documents or data types.

These vulnerabilities can be readily exploited by hackers to create DoS scenarios, information theft, or more general system misuse.

9) *Malicious XML Schema extensions (Schema Poisoning)*

XML Schemas provide formatting instructions for parsers when interpreting XML documents. XML Schema can reference external data types by including reference to external Schemas or namespaces. This versatility of Schema makes it susceptible to poisoning. An attacker may attempt to compromise the schema in its stored location and replace it with a similar but modified one.

Denial-of-service attacks against the grammar are straightforward if the schema is compromised. In addition, the door is open to manipulate data if data types are compromised, like modifying the encoding to allow for data mimicking that eventually gets through to a parser and re-formed into an attack. In the same way, when using extensive range of data formats (first of all, Unicode or multilingual data), XML schema may reference external transformation methods referenced by URL, which may be tampered or substituted with a malicious code.

10) *External Entity Attack*

Benefit of XML in ability to build documents dynamically at the time of parsing or composing by pointing to a URI where the actual data exists may expose a service to non-trustworthy external entities. An attacker can then replace the data being collected with malicious data.

3.6. XML Protocol threats/attacks

SOAP messaging infrastructure operates on top of network transport protocols, uses similar services for delivering and routing SOAP messages, and therefore can be susceptible to typical network/infrastructure based attacks like Denial of Service (DoS), replay or man-in-the-middle attacks.

11) *SOAP Flooding Attack (DoS)*

A hacker can issue repetitive SOAP message requests in an attempt to overload a Web service. This type of network activity will not be detected as a network intrusion because the source IP is valid, the network packet behavior is valid and the HTTP request is well formed. However, the business behavior is not legitimate and constitutes an XML-based intrusion. In the replay variant of this kind of attack, a completely valid XML payloads can be used to issue a denial of service attack.

12) *Replay Attacks*

Replay technique may be used for both DoS attacks and a kind of "man-in-the-middle" attacks. Replay technique can also be to manipulate AuthN/AuthZ security tokens, to fraud accounting system and bypass credit limits.

13) *Routing Detours*

In a distributed Web Services environment SOAP messages may pass multiple intermediate systems and may be actively routed depending resource availability at specific location. The WS-Routing specification provides a way to direct XML traffic through a complex environment. It operates by allowing an interim station to assign routing instructions to a SOAP message/document. If one of intermediate stations is compromised, it may be used for a man-in-the-middle attack by inserting bogus routing instructions to point a confidential document to a malicious location. From that location, then, it may be possible to forward on the document, after stripping out the malicious instructions, to its original destination.

14) *Message eavesdropping*

Eavesdropping is possible in not completely secure network. Eavesdropping can gather wide spectrum of sensitive information that may be used later for launching an attack. Even if the SOAP messages content is encrypted, a lot of information can be obtained by analyzing SOAPHeaders, WSDL ports, Certificate chain or CA trust relations, service names and addresses, etc..

15) "Man-in-the-middle" attack

One particular case of eavesdropping based attack is the "man-in-the-middle" attack that may target any subsystem of the target system. One specific type of attack that may be ultimately based on "man-in-the-middle" method is an attack on cryptographic system or related security services, for example, private key compromise, credentials theft or compromise, AuthN/AuthZ tokens tampering, etc.

3.7. Underlying transport protocol attacks

These are actually not related to XML Web Services but having direct effect on SOAP messaging performance and availability. Threats can include HTTP or HTTPS DoS attacks, or even lower layer transport level attacks.

4. Grid specific risks and threats

4.1. Grid security risks analysis

First Grid risks analysis from the operational point of view in made in the LCG project (see LCG Risk Analysis – <http://proj-lcg-security.web.cern.ch/proj-lcg-security/RiskAnalysis/risk.html>).

Proposed basic classification of risks (from the operational point of view):

- 1) Misuse
- 2) Confidentiality and Data integrity
- 3) Infrastructure disruption
- 4) Accidental categories

can be extended with more technology dependent

- 5) XML Web Services vulnerabilities/risks based on the analysis in the previous section

4.2 Grid processes/workflow analysis

TODO

LCG definition of the Grid Job/Task submission:

Job submission will normally progress from a User Interface (UI) machine, through a Resource Broker (RB) to a Computing Element (CE) and hence to the compute resource (usually a batch system). In some cases the RB is not used and the UI submits the job directly to the CE. Data access is through a Storage Element (SE) service

4.3 Analysis of the Security Policy and ULA/SLA for typical Grid applications

TODO

5. Protecting Grid and Web Services against known threats and vulnerabilities

TODO

- 1) Message alteration and eavesdropping

Message alteration and eavesdropping can be addressed by using the integrity and confidentiality mechanisms described in WS-Security.

2) Replay attacks

Replay attacks can be addressed by using message timestamps and caching, as well as other application-specific tracking mechanisms.

3) man-in-the-middle attacks

For WS-Security and SAML assertion tokens whose ownership is verified by use of keys, man-in-the-middle attacks are generally mitigated by the use of subject confirmation.

It is strongly RECOMMENDED that all relevant and immutable message data be signed.

It should be noted that transport-level security MAY be used to protect the message and the security token.

6. Grid Security Incidents – known cases and analysis

Known analyses of Grid Security Incidents nature mostly focus on vulnerabilities of AuthN/Z and Certificate compromise.

Dane Skow's "A walk through a Grid Security Incident"

<http://www.triumf.ca/hepix2003/pres/23-10/dskow/A%20walk%20through%20a%20Grid%20Security%20Incident-v2.ppt>

Summary of UF/IU security incident – June 2004 - http://www-mcs.ivdgl.org/mail_archive/grid3-all/2004/06/msg00048.html

Some typical/perceived Grid Security Incidents are discussed below.

6.1 Private key compromise

Evidence and log/audit events:

- patterns of key usage
- broken chain of PKC/keys/credentials
- copy is discovered in not a proper place

Problem is still remaining how to define at early stage that private key has been compromised?

6.2. Other/general credentials compromise

Evidence and log/audit events:

- patterns of key usage
- broken chain of PKC/keys/credentials
- copy is discovered in not a proper place
- originated not from default location
- sequent fault attempt to do action(s)
- > PDP/PEP logging/audit

6.3. Attempt to access sensitive data/information with lower level of privileges

Evidence and log/audit events:

TODO

6.4. Credit limit on resource exhausted

Evidence and log/audit events:

- few unsuccessful attempts to run actions with unmatched credit

7. Incident Response and Intrusion Detection

Intrusion Detection (ID) and Incident Response (IR) are different components of the Operational Security framework:

- * ID is rather proactive service; Incident Response is a reactive function.
- * ID produces alerts to prevent suspected activity escalation to incident
- * ID reacts on security events; security event may be escalated to the security incident
- * ID/Network protection is a responsibility of Network Operator or Team – to be defined by SLA and IResp agreement
- * CSIRT often has an influence on network security policy and IDS policy/criteria

7.1 Intrusion Detection

Intrusion Detection normally is a component of the network infrastructure/services.

Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) or Sensors are installed on or close to Firewalls, Routers, Switches or run as a special program on logfiles.

7.2 Incident Response

Incident Response is a complex of designated people, policies and procedures. Much of Incident Response practice among CSIRTs is defined by RFC2350.

7.2.1 Incident Response Policy

Incident Response Policy includes the following components:

- Types of incidents and level of support
 - ordered by severity list of Incident categories
- Co-operation, interaction and disclosure of information
 - Based on organisation's Security Policy
 - Availability of information and ordered list of information being considered for release both personal and vendor's
- Communication and Authentication
 - Information protection during communication
 - Mutual authentication between communicating parties
- Also depending on information category

7.2.2. Incident Response Procedures

Should be documented in full or in critical parts

1. Initial Incident Reporting and Assessment
2. Progress Recording

3. Identification and Analysis
4. Notification – initial and in the progress
5. Escalation – by Incident type or service level
6. Containment
7. Evidence collection
8. Removal and Recovery

7.3 Grid Security Incident vs Grid Security Event

- 1) few sequent failed logins
- 2) credit limit probing
- 3) attempt to access sensitive information
- 4) SOAP port scanning
- 5) HTTPS DoS attack?
- 6) patterns of suspected private key compromise
- 7) patterns of suspected AuthN/AuthZ security tokens compromise

8. Using IODEF for Grid Security Incident description

8.1. IODEF

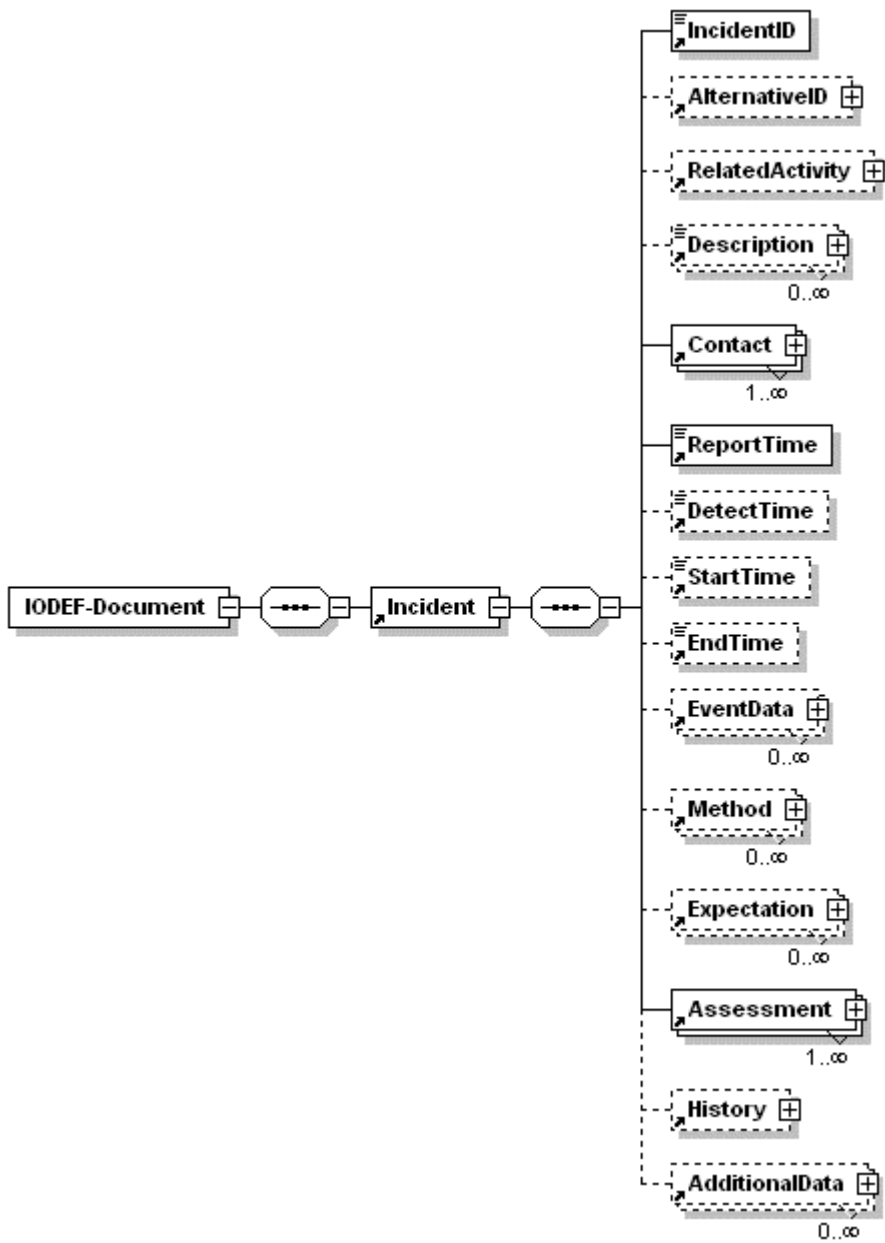
IODEF (Incident Object Description and Exchange Format) is currently being developed by IETF INCH WG (<http://www.ietf.org/html.charters/inch-charter.html>). Information about current IODEF development is available at unofficial IODEF website <http://www.cert.org/ietf/inch/inch.html> and at IODEF Schema information site <http://www.uazone.org/demch/projects/iodef/>

8.2. IODEF extensions for Grid and Web Services

Proposed extensions for description of Grid Security Incidents are being discussed on IETF-INCH mailing list <inch@NIC.SURFNET.NL> (<http://listserv.surfnet.nl/scripts/wa.exe?A2=ind04&L=inch&F=&S=&P=14557>).

Modelling of proposed extensions is presented at the IODEF Schema information site <http://www.uazone.org/demch/projects/iodef/> as IODEF version 0.31

Common IODEF components are represented by diagrams for the IODEF-Document/Incident and Event elements:



Element Principal

diagram						
properties	content	complex				
children	uid Name Credentials Attribute					
used by	element	System				
attributes	Name	Type	Use	Default	Fixed	Annotation
	usercat			unknown		
source	<pre> <xs:element name="Principal"> <xs:complexType> <xs:sequence> <xs:element ref="uid" minOccurs="0"/> <xs:element ref="Name" minOccurs="0"/> <xs:element ref="Credentials" maxOccurs="unbounded"/> <xs:element ref="Attribute" maxOccurs="unbounded"/> </xs:sequence> <xs:attribute ref="usercat" default="unknown"/> </xs:complexType> </xs:element> </pre>					

Element Credentials

properties	content	complex				
children	uid Name Certificate AdditionalData					
used by	element	Principal				
attributes	Name	Type	Use	Default	Fixed	Annotation
	usercat			unknown		
source	<pre> <xs:element name="Credentials"> <xs:complexType> <xs:sequence> <xs:element ref="uid" minOccurs="0"/> <xs:element ref="Name" minOccurs="0"/> <xs:element ref="Certificate" maxOccurs="unbounded"/> <xs:element ref="AdditionalData" minOccurs="0" maxOccurs="unbounded"/> </xs:sequence> <xs:attribute ref="usercat" default="unknown"/> </xs:complexType> </xs:element> </pre>					

Element XMLWebService

<p>diagram</p>	
<p>properties</p>	<p>content complex</p>
<p>children</p>	<p>url PortType wsdl Binding MessagePart</p>
<p>used by</p>	<p>element System</p>
<p>source</p>	<pre> <xs:element name="XMLWebService"> <xs:complexType> <xs:sequence> <xs:element ref="url"/> <xs:element ref="PortType" minOccurs="0"/> <xs:element ref="wsdl" minOccurs="0"/> <xs:element ref="Binding" minOccurs="0"/> <xs:element ref="MessagePart" minOccurs="0" maxOccurs="unbounded"/> </xs:sequence> </xs:complexType> </xs:element> </pre>

9. Summary

Proposed analysis of the Web services and Grid security threats and risks provides an initial base for developers and practitioners for closer look at potential threats and vulnerabilities.

Web Services technologies and further their development in Computer grids open new kind of Security attacks and Incidents that can be defined as “white collar” attacks. Specifics of this kind of attacks from the point of view of applications and network protection is that malfactor is interested in correct and smooth work of a target system or application. Classically, white collar crime or commercial crime involves crimes such as fraud, ordinary theft, identity theft, etc. They are a lot easier to hide than other forms of crime and therefore it is much harder for the business to stop and the criminal justice system to deal with. The same may be applied to attack via misuse of WSDL information and tampering SOAP messages and communication. Incidents based on credentials theft will be even more difficult to discover at the earlier stage and track down to the originator. With high level of impersonation and use of the electronic identity in Grids and Web Services character of threats and security incidents will inevitably change with time.

References

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IETF INCH WG - <http://www.ietf.org/html.charters/inch-charter.html>

Unofficial IODEF website - <http://www.cert.org/ietf/inch/inch.html>

IODEF Schema information site - <http://www.uazone.org/demch/projects/iodef/>

Appendix A. Grid security threats and risks and required IODEF description elements

ID	Description	Evidence (what, where) and required IODEF elements
Technology platform (XML Web Services) vulnerabilities and threats		
T1	WSDL Scanning	
T2	WSDL Parameter Tampering	
T3	Recursive XML document (payload) content	
T4	Oversized XML documents/payloads	
T5	Malicious code exploiting known vulnerabilities in applications	
T6	Viruses, or Trojan horse programs	
T7	Malicious XPath or XQuery built-in operations	
T8	SQL Injection	
T9	Malicious XML Schema extensions (so called Schema Poisoning)	
T10	External Entity Attack	
T11	SOAP Flooding Attack (DoS)	
T12	Replay Attacks	
T13	Routing Detours	
T14	Message eavesdropping	
T15	"Man-in-the-middle" attack	
Confidentiality and Data integrity issues		
C1	Theft of credentials, e.g. private keys	File access, Record/Log (patterns), Credentials , Impact, Principal/Identity (Victim)
C2	Data or passwords/pass phrases exposed, e.g. in unprotected files or on the network	Yet Not Incident – Just risk
C3	Falsification of scientific data, analysis and/or results	File access, Log, Record/ Data
C4	Unauthorized monitoring of network communications	System/process, Record (Registry)
C5	Unauthorized access to data	Log, Data or FileList
C6	Unauthorized distribution or exposure of data	Data/uri or File, log
C8	Identity or usage information is harvested by unauthorized persons	System/process, Record (Registry)
C9	Security assertions (AuthN or AuthZ token, etc.) tampering or hijacking	
Disruption of LCG infrastructure for political or other reasons		
D1	Disruption via exploitation of security holes	Ordinary attack (System, Contact, Method, Record)
D2	Corruption of or damage to data	Data/uri or File, log
D3	DOS attacks towards LCG to prevent normal working of network or services	Ordinary attack (multiple System, Contact, Method, Record)
D5	"Poisoned" resources are deployed on LCG to confuse operations, debugging or results	Data/uri or File, log, source system – the same as Data modification

D6	Attack by disgruntled users, employees or ex-employees	Ordinary attack (multiple System, Contact, Method, Record)
D7	Use of "social engineering" methods to attack LCG resources	Mostly resulted in theft of credentials
D8	Damage caused by viruses, worms, trojans or back-doors	Level of ordinary attacks
D9	Misleading trouble reports to the GOC or incident response mechanisms, to disrupt operations or damage reputation	Related to Incident Handling System – should be secured by mutual AuthN
D10	Modification or defacement of User Interfaces, documentation, monitoring etc, for disruption or advertising	Ordinary attack
Misuse of LCG resources - CPU, storage, network etc		
M1	Resources used to launch online attacks on other sites via DOS, Virus, Worms, SPAM etc	System, Contact, Record/logfile
M2	Resources used for offline attacks on other sites, e.g. to crack passwords or pass phrases	Data , Record/log/ pattern
M3	Resources used to distribute or share non-LCG data, e.g. copyrighted, illegal, or inappropriate material	Data/uri , addData (sys image)
M4	Resources misused by inappropriate setting of access control or priority	System modification, FileList, User?/
M5	Use of LCG resources by unauthorized parties	Log, Credentials (Attacker)
M6	Use of LCG resources for unauthorized purposes, e.g. financial gain	Log, Credentials (Attacker) , impact
Security Issues - Non-intentional or accidental		
A1	Unauthorized use resulting from insecure middleware or bad security design/implementation	Risk – not incident
A2	Development process results in insecure middleware	Risk – not incident
A3	Deployment process results in insecure middleware	Risk – not incident
A4	Development process results in poor fault tolerance and effective loss of service (snowballing failure)	Risk – not incident
A5	Deployment process results in poor fault tolerance and effective loss of service (snowballing failure)	Risk – not incident
A6	Failure to perform security audit of new software	Risk – not incident
A7	Lack of timely patching of systems and middleware for security holes	Risk – not incident
A8	The need to incorporate legacy resources/applications prevents addressing security holes	Risk – not incident
A9	Problems from misleading or missing documentation	Risk – not incident
A10	Lack of critical security services, e.g. CRL's at CA's	
A11	Hardware faults	May lead to an Incident
A12	Disasters, e.g. fire or flood	Risk – not incident
A13	Accidental corruption of or damage to data	May be investigated as an Incident – ordinary Data/File corruption/modification
A14	Lack of knowledge and/or insufficient training of management, operations and support staff	Risk – not incident
A15	Security Infrastructure is not well matched to user requirements or expectations, and therefore too restrictive or too open	Risk – not incident
A16	LCG Authorization controls are insufficient to allow effective management by VO's, groups or users	Risk – not incident. Should not happen at all, Sec/AuthZ service must

		use existing tools.
Other attacks		
O1	Theft of systems	Not technical
O2	Theft of software	-“-
O3	Physical sabotage of systems	-“-
O4	Theft of primary or backup data media	-“-