

Thursday, March 25, 2004

Bugzillas greatest bug

A few hours ago I had some trouble logging into our bug-tracking system. Of course there was no real problem, I just forgot my password and I've never logged into it from this computer, so there was no password-manager to assist me. Even worse, I could not use the "I'm so stupid, I forgot my password, please email me a new one"-Button because my mailservers has hanged since the day before and my provider hasn't fixed the problem, yet.

So I decided to use my shell-account, open, run the mysql-client and search for the password in the database. Finding the database used by bugzilla was no problem, but there was no "user" table! I took another few minutes to ascertain: there were lots of tables, a "groups"-table, a "user_group_map" and so on. But no table named "user" or something similar.

I could not believe, that bugzilla may work without a "user"-table, so I asked my friend to log into bugzilla.

As I assumed, he could not log into bugzilla, too! My fears became true - somehow the user-table of bugzilla was removed. Maybe by an SQL-injection-attack from some bad guys, maybe by a terrible bug in bugzilla or maybe by one of the system's administrators who dropped this table by accident.

It took some time searching for a file containing the SQL-statements used during the installation of bugzilla that initializes the database-structure. Later we discovered a table in the existing database. This table is called "profiles" and contains all the data we expected in the non-existing table "user"!

Logging in bugzilla was quite easy after changing my password stored in this table. But my friend still seemed to be in trouble. He had not forgotten his password, but he also could not log in. Once again, we updated his password in the database - without success. Finally we recognized, that he tried to access with his user-name and password instead of his email-address and password.

Shortly after solving this problem, we realized once more: usually the bug is in front of the screen.

Posted by gERD in Nonsense at 23:12

Wednesday, March 3, 2004

History's biggest disasters vol. 1 : Atlantis

Ever wondered who is behind all the big disasters in history? Well then look no further - you have found just the man. No kidding - want to know what happened to the city of atlantis? Roughly at the time it is supposed to have happened (~9.600 BC), I was studying the power of the rumour. I had gathered knowledge about the intricacies of planting rumours from the greatest scholars, and felt the urge to test my new found knowledge...

I needed something big - something positively huge. As I was waiting for the right moment to act, a volcano erupted on the mediterranean shores of ancient greece - and the beauty of it simply stunned me: with the use of a 20 feet tall broken statue of the goddess Atlantis, and a very nimble tongue, I was able to plant the seed of the greatest hoax of all time.

So how did I manage it? Probably needless to say, but here goes anyway: a master's secret is not so easily given. But basically, I had to follow but a few simple rules. Man loves mystery, especially if there is some hidden treasure involved (this is true even since before the stone age - believe me, I tested that too). Just wrap your golden, shining mystery in a veil of fatally precise (but completely off the mark) indications of where and what happened, and tell of the fate of all the fair maidens that were swallowed by the depths in the cataclysm. A few broken pieces of the statue I mentioned earlier, and the sightings of its other remnants by divers gave the necessary bit of proof needed to ignite that little spark of doubt that makes a story hit "home". And to make them all go really wild, I suggested that some of those fair maidens had now turned into mesmerizing mermaids, guarding the treasure... (I could not help it)

Actually I am quite proud - there is nothing more satisfying than watching the seed you planted grow some really huge roots, and have generations of commoners and scientists alike hack each other to pieces (figuratively and literally) about theories and "reliable" sources on the subject. So much energy spent on a puff of smoke... it is not only beautiful, it is consummate, simple and pure genius: one of mankind's eternal traits - gullibility.

Atlantis: the real story?

Posted by argh in Nonsense at 02:09