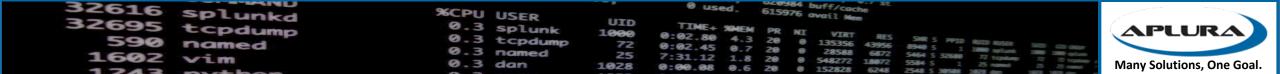
## Splunk and Windows Event Log: Best Practices, Reduction and Enhancement

David Shpritz

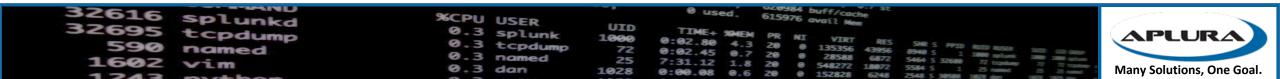
#### Aplura, LLC

Baltimore Area Splunk User Group June 2017



#### Agenda

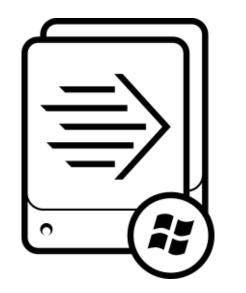
- Getting Windows Events into Splunk: Patterns and Practices
- TURN DOWN THE VOLUME: License reduction tips
- Making them more useful: Improving knowledge objects



#### Ground Rules

- Fidelity levels
  - How complete are the events?
- Windows Event interpretation
  - These are binary records
  - Agents can read them directly or ask the Windows API
  - This means that you aren't really getting the event log, just a representation of it

32616	Splunkd	%CPU USER	0 used. 615976 avail Mem
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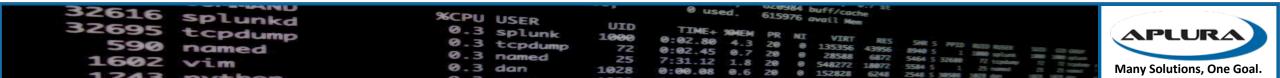
# Getting Windows Events into Splunk

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#### Different Ways to Skin a Cat

- Best to Worst
  - Universal Forwarder
  - Windows Event Forwarding
  - WMI
  - EVTX Import
  - Third Party Syslog Agent (Snare, for example)





#### Universal Forwarder

- The best way to get Windows events (of course we're biased)
- Pros
  - High fidelity
  - Can be controlled by Deployment Server
  - Can filter Windows events
  - Can run scripts (batch, exe, PS)
  - Can also get admon (great for assets and identities)
- Cons
  - "Another agent!?!?"
  - Security concerns

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#### Windows Event Forwarding

- Native to Windows (2008R2 and up)
- Pros
  - Native to Windows, no agent
  - Can be configured with GPO
- Cons
  - Almost high fidelity
  - Slower
  - Scalability issues
  - Customer testing shows it consumes more resources than a UF

32616	Splunkd	%CPU USER		0 Used. 015976 avail Mem	
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#### WMI

- Used by a Splunk system to collect Windows Events from a remote system
- Pros
  - Remote, no agent
- Cons
  - Slow
  - A lot of overhead
  - Limited collection availability (may need multiple systems to pull all your Windows hosts)
  - Low fidelity
  - Dealing with permissions

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#### EVTX Import

- Can be used to export event logs from a system and then import the raw files on another system
- Often seen in "air-gapped" environments
- Pros
  - No network connection needed from the client systems to the target indexers
- Cons
  - Low fidelity (remember that "interpretation" thing earlier?)
  - Moving and removing the files is a manual process
  - Open to event duplication

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### Third Party Syslog Agent (Snare)

- It's a thing, these agents exist
- Pros
  - Can work with your existing syslog infrastructure
- Cons
  - Super low fidelity
  - Unreliable (syslog never dies)
  - Remote configuration?

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# TURN DOWN THE VOLUME: License reduction tips

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### These things are chatty

- Splunk estimates between 200-300mb per day, per system
- Of course, that can vary wildly
- Lots of repeated events with little to no value (looking at you 4662)
- Do we really need all of these?
- Do we need every part of all of these?



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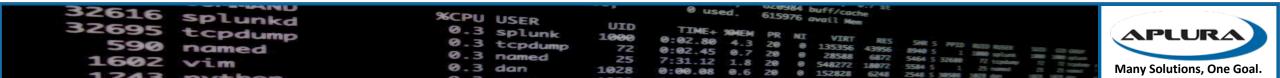
#### Stratergery

- Pick your systems carefully
- Pick your inputs carefully on those systems
- Whitelist and Blacklist carefully
- Resolving objects
- Baseline?
- Current\_only? Start\_from?
- XmlWinEventLog
- Filtering and cleaning up

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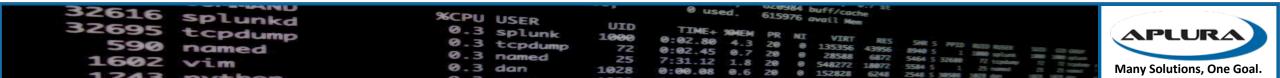
#### Which systems?

- Just Active Directory servers?
- Endpoints?
- Servers?
- Sorry, this is on a case by case basis



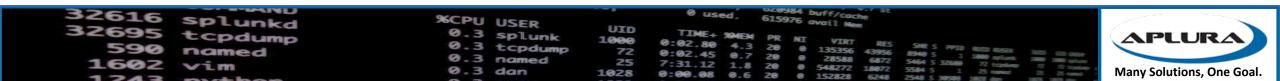
#### Picking your inputs (not your nose)

- Set a baseline for which logs ALL your systems should be sending
- For other eventlogs, use an individual app for turning on that input (DS-Input-wineventlog\_application)
- Do you need admon from all your systems? Probably not, just on a few AD systems
- Make sure you aren't using legacy inputs (WMI vs Perfmon)
- Look out for Windows Firewall Events (maybe Stream instead?)



#### Whitelisting and Blacklisting

- Can have a big impact on your license usage
- Investing the time in "which events" can pay off big
- Careful with a whitelist-only approach
- Note that there is a limit to the number of lists
- Performed at the forwarder, so does not use network traffic



#### Some nice blacklist options to start with

https://gist.github.com/automine/a3915d5238e2967c8d44b0ebcfb66147

```
1 [WinEventLog://Security]
```

```
2 disabled = 0
```

```
3 start_from = oldest
```

```
4 current_only = 0
```

```
5 evt_resolve_ad_obj = 1
```

```
6 checkpointInterval = 5
```

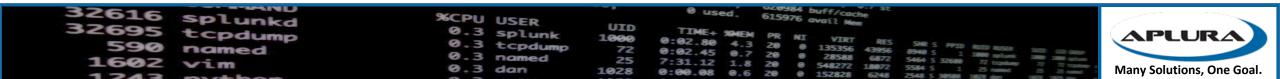
```
7 blacklist1 = EventCode="4662" Message="0bject Type:\s+(?!groupPolicyContainer)"
```

- 8 blacklist2 = EventCode="566" Message="Object Type:\s+(?!groupPolicyContainer)"
- 9 blacklist3 = EventCode="4688" Message="New Process Name: (?i)^(C:\\Program
- Files\\Splunk(?:UniversalForwarder)?\\bin\\(?:btool|splunkd|splunk|splunk\-(?:MonitorNoHandle|admon|
- netmon|perfmon|powershell|regmon|winevtlog|winhostinfo|winprintmon|wmi))\.exe)"

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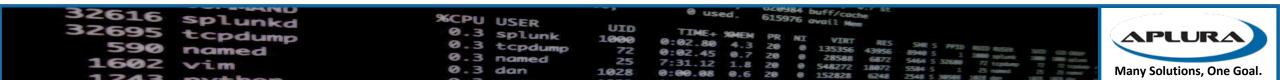
#### AD Object Resolution

- Resolves things like SIDs and GIUDs
- You can tell Splunk which DCs to use to resolve these
- Can add some overhead (CPU and Memory), but usually low impact
- Recommendation is to resolve them (look at the evt\_\*) options in inputs.conf for Windows Event Logs



#### Baselining AD

- Will collect your whole AD schema
- Can take up a lot of memory on AD controllers
- But baselining is useful for Assets and Identities in ES
- So be careful which systems you baseline on



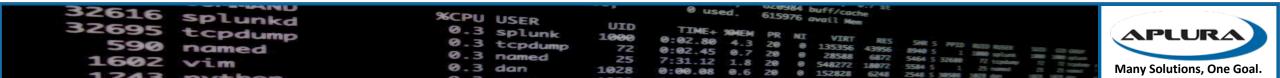
#### Current\_only vs. start\_from

- Current\_only tells Splunk to only grab the latest events (like tail –f, if Windows had such a thing)
- Useful to make sure you don't get all the historical data
- May want to set that to "true" on initial deployment
- Then set to "false", restart, and it should pick up from the checkpoint
- Start\_from should be "oldest"
- Setting it to "newest" can be used to grab a backlog of events
  - I've never seen this in the wild

32616	Splunkd	%CPU USER	0 used. 615976 avail Nem	
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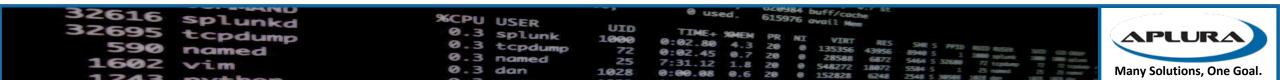
#### XmlWinEventLog

- Should reduce license usage (claims are up to 70%)
- It will always be in English (pro? Con?)
- Harder to read, I mean, it's XML
- Quality of CIM compliance has been varied in the past
- It doesn't "look like Windows events" and some auditors are not bright
- What if you could get the same log savings and the readability



#### Filtering and cleaning up

- Don't use "suppress\_text"
- It's tempting, but there goes the baby with the bathwater
- Maybe just clean up the text you don't need

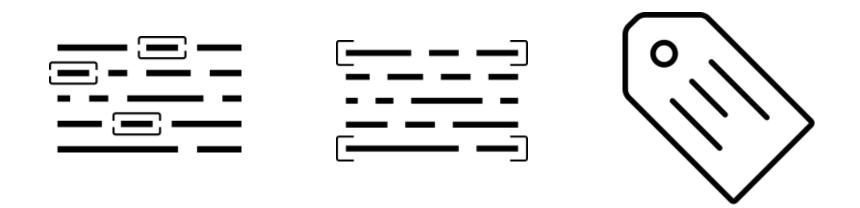


#### Filtering and cleaning up

- IPv6 support in event logs results in a lot of "::" and "ffff" and other garbage
- Let's clean up a lot (thanks to a lot of people for this)
- [WinEventLog:Security]
- 2 #Returns most of the space savings XML would provide
- 3 SEDCMD-clean0-null\_sids = s/(?m)(^\s+[^:]+\:)\s+-?\$/\1/g s/(?m)(^\s+[^:]+\:)\s+-?\$/\1/g s/(?m)(\:)(\s+NULL SID)\$/\1/g s/(?m)(ID\:)(\s+0x0)\$/\1/g
- 4 SEDCMD-clean1-summary = s/This event is generated[\S\s\r\n]+\$//g
- 5 SEDCMD-clean2-cert\_summary = s/Certificate information is only[\S\s\r\n]+\$//g
- 6 SEDCMD-clean3-blank\_ipv6 = s/::ffff://g
- 7 SEDCMD-clean4-token\_elevation\_summary = s/Token Elevation Type indicates[\S\s\r\n]+\$//g
- 8 SEDCMD-clean5-firewall\_summary = s/(?ms)(The Windows Filtering Platform has permitted.\*\$)//g
- 9 SEDCMD-clean6-network\_share\_summary = s/(?ms)(A network share object was checked to see whether.\*\$)//g
- SEDCMD-clean7-authentication\_summary = s/(?ms)(The computer attempted to validate the credentials.\*\$)//g
- SEDCMD-clean8-local\_ipv6 = s/(?ms)(::1)//g

#### <u>https://gist.github.com/automine/5c8ef5b50e1df38249dfba01a70f2875</u>

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## Making Them More Useful

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1602		0.3 dan	1028		any Solutions, One Goal.

#### Sorry, I ran out of time

- Got ES? Take a look at Ryan Faircloth's SecKit work
  - <u>https://splunkbase.splunk.com/app/3059/</u>
  - <u>https://bitbucket.org/SPLServices/seckit\_sa\_idm\_windows</u>
- Alternative TAs
  - Should help with KO overhead
  - <a href="https://github.com/my2ndhead/TA-microsoft-windows">https://github.com/my2ndhead/TA-microsoft-windows</a> (can do XML events)
  - <u>https://bitbucket.org/SPLServices/seckit\_ta\_microsoft\_windows</u> (for use with SecKit)

32616 splunkd	%CPU USER		0 used. 615976 avail Nem	
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