



Defeating DNS Amplification Attacks

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History

- DNS amplification attacks aren't new
 - Periodically reemerge as attackers read history books ☺
- NANOG 56
 - Reports of unusual DNS traffic on *authoritative* DNS servers
- Resource Rate Limiting (RRL) proposed for nameservers
 - Subsequently implemented in BIND, NLNet NSD, Knot, more
 - NLNet paper shows effectiveness for certain attacks
- Largest DDoS ever uses open resolvers - April 2013
 - 300Gbps targeted at Spamhaus
- Providers worldwide see attacks using their DNS *resolvers*
 - Trouble for networks: load balancer failures, saturated links, server stress, operational duress
 - No media headlines but lots of targets suffer with traffic spikes



Quick Introduction

Amplification attacks rely on:

- Spoofed IP source addresses
- UDP as transport
- Small DNS questions that generate large DNS answers
 - ANY queries are an old favorite, 80x amplification
 - DNSSEC-signed zones were an early favorite, but seem to have diminished
 - Other query types showing up: TXT, even A/AAAAA
 - Attackers appear to be creating "purpose built" RRs



What amplification can be achieved?

One commonly used query in the past “ANY ripe.net”
Yields an impressively large answer (MSG SIZE rcvd: 2884):

```
; <>> DiG 9.8.3-P1 <>> ripe.net any @64.89.232.93 +edns=0 ; global options: +cmd ; Got answer: ; ; ->> HEADER<<- opcode: QUERY, status: NOERROR, id: 64292 ; flags: qr rd ra; QUERY:  
1, ANSWER: 26, AUTHORITY: 6, ADDITIONAL: 3 ; OPT PSEUDOSECTION: ; EDNS: version: 0, flags: udp: 4096 ; QUESTION SECTION: ;ripe.net. IN ANY ;ANSWER SECTION: ripe.net.  
197 IN RRSIG NSEC 5 2 300 20131109122844 20131010112844 2473 ripe.net. dOdaF81ic+j6DscNmDbVVAEPt7SLXpZ0bIR4Jnh+4c53RbhM8HH46Gx_jfYAB2COZKdWnkW MbW/  
ifnX3c6gGcz7uRoMFWMTHBXPvTzjyLDj/thR CrO2ntLdP8MrM5EUyq35FiSDNl1vyzaEo9rXNsMGjMH2bd5CQSpb v yLU= ripe.net. 197 IN NSEC 256dns.ripe.net. A NS SOA MX AAAA RRSIG  
NSEC DNSKEY ripe.net. 197 IN RRSIG MX 5 2 300 20131109122844 20131010112844 2473 ripe.net. AjfdeBOkOWdMTfybgvidmHeeQzm6bwxLEN1qcPp2YQvoWE2VbrLmeUo  
JiKvecGHQIACBr1VKuguGq++bEYTxbGkrac7iG19saisThwWFZLhka l3xhXL2zq890pnykPlYFGf6ZPmsYebC92BYQDGXtqnwpwyghhLoYysQ0 ZAA= ripe.net. 197 IN MX 250 postlady.ripe.net.  
ripe.net. 197 IN MX 200 postgir.ripe.net. ripe.net. 3497 IN RRSIG NS 5 2 3600 20131109122844 20131010112844 2473 ripe.net.  
RGDUw6Cu6Sh7zixsKiiJyDIIkEZEK4LagEl09s6ZnGN27GQAFHkSE9up lkAfsaJWe3NI9fjQWFwJ/hZ5rHcgsz5LD/eK4W5VUWpZc6BX0YuikPxPb LSxMoFebAkqRklEp7TTMRUuaZyTK  
+m0UadLgpp0nYXe8E6uzE8Cj2zv0 xog= ripe.net. 197 IN RRSIG AAAA 5 2 300 20131109122844 20131010112844 2473 ripe.net. CiltCl8jysHsg2MHSu/  
4bPl7jYaFSJGZnMeOncTAcnCocAEo3+B5Y7s 9QQDWXAxVxYXTps9tdtAdtLOhR0TbH45l+OExhS5CWYBJo+TWghV/r  
WNyFOUJUdAIrPm2KdgPmRqfw4917o5wbnAjefcyVZ320tBX50LTDBe 10A= ripe.net. 197 IN AAAA 2001:67c::22::c100:68b ripe.net. 21497 IN RRSIG A 5 2 21600 20131109122844  
20131010112844 2473 ripe.net. FIR1B1oGLmKUmvDHvhmDBzV6q2YXmLpZ8KpPVwDw2k/O6EBs+xmWq lvVuUdtSIbhgfYqVgB50HFCKRrDdnzUszeE0SQKMjR8PFu6EGckJF2P  
dBveonSjowyYqgE7I+4BHB1Cx5csEO+VSCI7uiE99CcqyhvkYnGeJcY0 Ckk= ripe.net. 21497 IN A 193.0.6.139 ripe.net. 3497 IN RRSIG SOA 5 2 3600 20131109122844 20131010112844 2473  
ripe.net. GKCyXE2xtCj0czgyZ6CEPzL7BNldfK1iz7JiFalw87UEZA1OjY2rP04 qsU1B9KPMHWkVY9EqjEshgSwbGrdy/1Y0LDzpYYHszvB0lkpu/JxcVR G/  
NI23fvzs96Mc5iTp3ovuhLQfgSz31ojJMd4yowcRL4ds1jmgme/l/nQ= ripe.net. 3497 IN SOA pri.authdns.ripe.net. dns.ripe.net. 1381407901 3600 600 864000 300 ripe.net. 3497 IN RRSIG  
DNSKEY 5 2 3600 20131109122844 20131010112844 60338 ripe.net. BeHIOgTeY/NV4DMXZpcqXF1fCcaRD+gpXnyRnu11x4EZAFbYX142HG  
OxTZEZ7168qxhULCeVKat0L0w7nh5Sh/vpfUXhd+fxVoDuk19aAgWY yDmaVd4z2Kc8E3LKKNzS9xUksx+laEc7Ff+3GVuhi/AVL8NC/A3bP vPoxe5MRPZ/  
OGwd5aQtvgm811y whole query omitted for brevity
```

There are lots of similar queries

Attackers also creating “purpose built” amplification zones (more later)



Some Simple Math

A relatively low bandwidth home broadband connection (~2-3 Mbps) can generate 58 Mbps at a DNS server!

18 home connections = ~ 1Gbps of traffic

A few thousand connections = 100s of Gbps as was seen with attack on spamhaus

Mustering these kinds of resources is pretty easy



Several Variants of Amplification Attacks

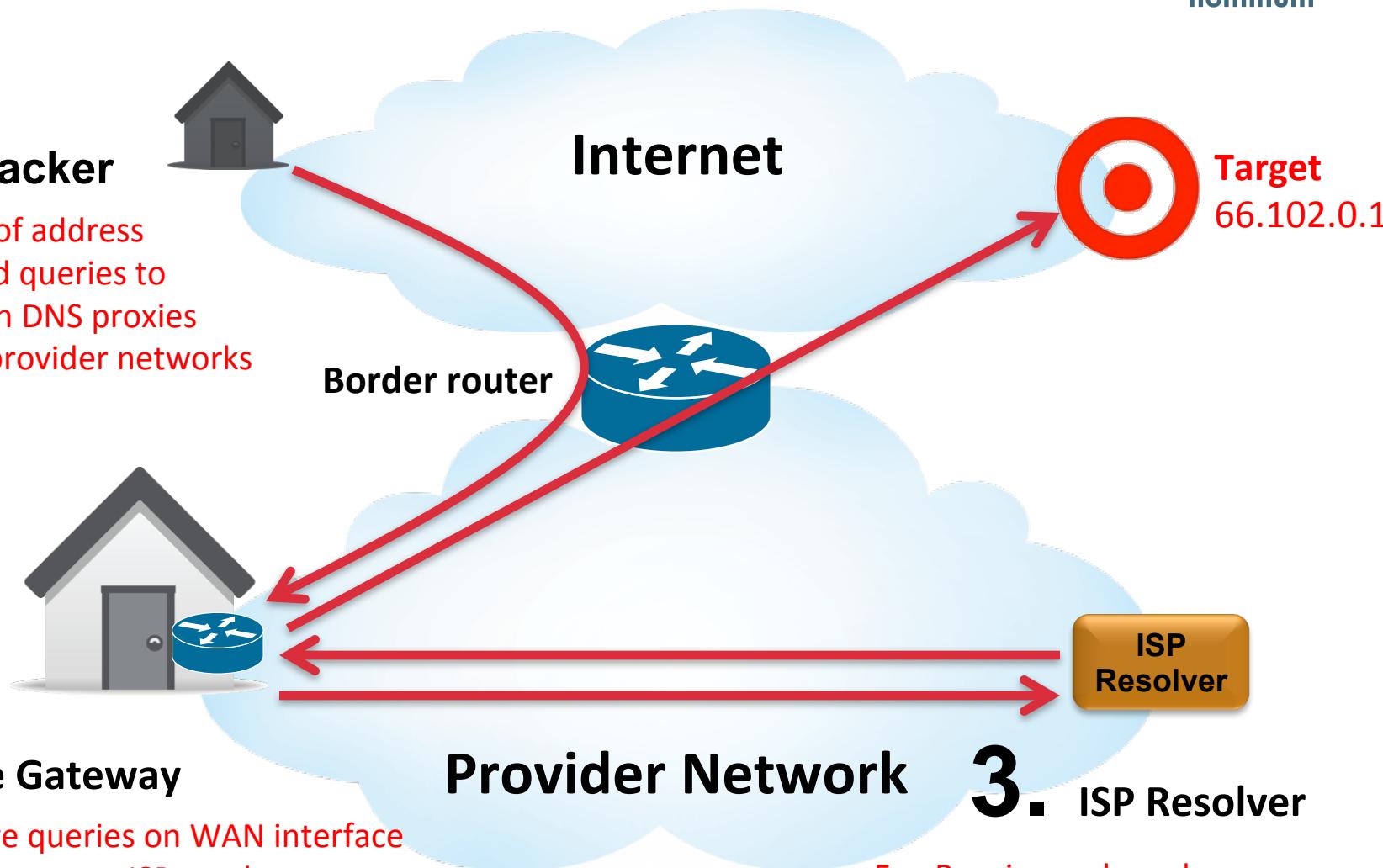
- Send queries directly to authoritative servers
 - Response Rate Limiting can help
 - But attacks can be modified to make RRL less effective, distribute, query different names etc
 - More work needed here, but *not* the topic of this presentation
- Send queries to open resolvers on the Internet
 - Works well but Best Practices will deter these attacks
 - Shut down open resolvers or limit IP ranges that can access the server when possible
 - Closely monitor for attack activity
 - Not the focus of this presentation, but some techniques discussed here apply
- Send queries to ISP resolvers via home gateways
 - Huh?

Using ISP Resolvers for DNS Amplification



1. Attacker

- 1. Spoof address
- 2. Send queries to open DNS proxies on provider networks



2. Home Gateway

- 3. Receive queries on WAN interface
- 4. Proxy query to ISP resolver
- 7. Forward answer to Target

Provider Network

3. ISP Resolver

- 5. Receive and resolve query
- 6. Answer the query as it's from a legitimate user!



How Did We Figure this Out?

- Many reports from ISPs about attacks on their networks
 - isc.org/ripe.net in the most used domains
- Interesting work from openresolverproject.org
 - Millions of open resolvers
 - Scan with CHAOS query returns versions of resolvers
- A BIG surprise
 - 445,881 Open Vantio Resolvers **What?**
- We have not sold *anywhere near* 445,881 copies of Vantio
 - If we had I guess I would not be giving this talk here today
 - Someone is stealing our SW! (and they're not even using it right!)

How to find the real resolver

- No, something else must be going on
 - Customers seeing attacks restrict IP ranges ("closed" resolvers)
 - Queries have to be coming from legitimate IPs
 - What's going on?????
- Setup special domain restest.rwdns.de
- Ask unique every open resolver/proxy
 - dig 64.195.2.130.restest.rwdns.de @64.195.2.130
 - On auth server the resolver query source is seen::

```
querystore.replay duration=10m filter=((zone (true  
(restest.rwdns.de))))  
{  
    client-address => '74.125.183.18#56355'  
    local-address => '78.46.109.173#53'  
    name => '64.195.2.130.restest.rwdns.de'
```



More Tricks from Attackers

Purpose Built Amplification Domains

- Domains purpose built for amplification are being uncovered
 - Offline analytics on DNS data sets
 - Network operators parsing log files
- Very large message sizes have been observed: ~4096 bytes!
 - A, MX, and Text records
 - Dummy data
 - Some domains have real data with some record types (A, AAA) and bad with others (TXT, ANY)
 - Some admins just don't understand the effects there entries can have (dual use domains ;-)
 - 250 MX different mx entries might not be a good idea
 - Several 4096 bits DNSKEY might be more secure but...



Advantages of This Approach (for attackers)

- ISP resolvers are a great resource
 - Lots of them out there
 - Usually high capacity
 - Reliable and available
- Best Practices won't help!
 - Spoofing protections within provider network won't work
 - Spoofed packets enter at the network border
 - Restricting resolver IP Ranges doesn't work
 - Queries appear to be sourced from internal IP ranges
- Filtering DNS queries at the border isn't an option
 - Other DNS traffic: incoming answers to recursive queries from provider resolvers, incoming queries to authoritative servers
 - Subscribers may run DNS servers
- Upgrading Home Gateways is challenging (impossible?) - lots of running room -

So what *WILL* work?



What can be Done?

Capture Basic Resolver Log Data

- Have DNS logging turned on all the time
 - Essential resource to identify attack activity
- Get a “dashboard” up so baseline DNS operation is always visible
 - Familiarity with "normal" makes it easier to spot changes
 - Queries per second, settable graph window
 - Top domains queried – scrollable through a few hundred domains
 - Distribution of Query Types
 - Check for domains that yield the biggest responses



Here's how we can detect stuff

```
▪ statmon> querystore.top-domains filter=((response-size-ge (true  
    (1500)))) duration=1d  
{  
    type => 'querystore.top-domains'  
    domain => 'isc.org'  
    percentage => '69.9'  
    qps => '1.655'  
    count => '143036'  
}  
{  
    domain => 'doc.gov'  
    percentage => '28.9'  
    qps => '0.684'  
    count => '59079'  
}
```

More detection

```
■ querystore.group-count group-by=(name query-type ) filter=((response-size-ge (true (1500)))) duration=1d  
{  
    name => '34.30.46.207.in-addr.arpa'  
    query-type => 'PTR'  
    count => '4'  
}  
{  
    name => 'doc.gov'  
    query-type => 'ANY'  
    count => '3623'  
}  
{  
    name => 'www.djcgafix.netfirms.com'  
    query-type => 'A'  
    count => '95'  
}
```

What can be Done?

Ingress Filtering of Queries

- Less work for the resolver – drop on ingress
- Filtering at the resolver less of a problem than at Authoritative server
 - Less exposure of Kaminsky style attack
 - Far less attractive targets: Individual hosts (stub) versus resolver
 - Can filter ISP resolver addresses
- Filter incoming queries by Query Type
 - Weed out simple attacks - ANY queries
- Filter incoming queries by Query Type *and* domain name
 - Finer grained filtering minimizes collateral damage



What can be Done? Filtering Based on Reputation Lists

- Defend against purpose built or “dual use” domains
 - Need to trigger action based on a specific FQDN
 - Additional selection on query type
- What should the purposed action be?
 - Drop not as bad for a resolver as for an authoritative server, but should only be used at last resort
 - Forcing real clients to TCP seems to be a better way
 - Hopefully stub resolvers speak TCP....



Sample policy

- `lvp-list.add name=dropamplify-exact element-type=name`
- `lvp-list.add name=dropamplify-sub element-type=name`

- `lvp-policy.add name=dropamplify action=drop selectors=(and ((qtype ANY) (or ((qname (dropamplify-exact exact)) (qname (dropamplify-sub subdomain))))))`
- `lvp-binding.add view=world policy=dropamplify priority=100`

- `lvp-node.add list=dropamplify-exact name=.`
- `lvp-node.add list=dropamplify-sub name=ripe.net`

It's All About Size

- As attacks get more subtle they'll be harder to detect
 - Purpose built domains
 - Utilize domains where admins have screwed up.
 - Multiple domains in one attack
 - Possibly less amplification per query
- How do we detect that
 - Log query response sizes
 - New metric “*top traffic domains*”
 - What names generate the most traffic?
 - What clients generate the most traffic?
- Script to generate list of top traffic generators to mitigate an attack



Samples

- isc.org ANY
- doc.gov ANY
- irlwinning.com A or ANY
- 34.30.46.207.in-addr.arpa PTR
- outmail.zyngamail.com A
- www.djcgrafix.netfirms.com A
- '.' ANY



isc.org

```
dig isc.org any
```

```
[..]
```

```
; ; ANSWER SECTION:
```

```
isc.org.      6836 IN  TXT  "$Id: isc.org,v 1.1855 2013-09-26 21:27:44  
bicknell Exp $"
```

```
isc.org.      6836 IN  TXT  "v=spf1 a mx ip4:204.152.184.0/21  
ip4:149.20.0.0/16 ip6:2001:04F8::0/32 ip6:2001:500:60::65/128 ~all"
```

```
isc.org.      6836 IN  RRSIG   TXT 5 2 7200 20131031022653 20131001022653  
50012 isc.org. lgN51hBVR3EDuDL7MyfYdQ+Is3VzA2rvEZNSM2eZS4zKmwY+Y1ELi4Yh  
BXuzFtK9Rg3N0CON6/SQJYA8TuUG78UE9OoP4/nLkOaDHLkHMTgq1yHz  
8oJ0n5mzHICNgYqphd34yRjBoldjtE9Rhrp4Q3aGVyzW21nPY6NIR1AW BNk=
```

```
[..]
```

```
; ; Query time: 1 msec
```

```
; ; SERVER: 127.0.0.1#53(127.0.0.1)
```

```
; ; WHEN: Thu Oct  3 12:31:07 2013
```

```
; ; MSG SIZE  rcvd: 2045
```



doc.gov any

```
dig doc.gov any
;; Truncated, retrying in TCP mode.
[...]
;; ANSWER SECTION:
doc.gov.      25    IN    DNSKEY    256 3 8 AwEAAeBP9cEQR3eTa4u1x3WpLwnCog7rw/
122hXgwiHZIjGAz26+1/cW
+QEHS9bA1JnRtZhmlBYN72DvfpshuEL2o6hh2yVw7wcRC4fNOTxOeury
wLrkKZQE0WC4fyaxlXJsIWRwLEb3H4YYQibGbPRWyGy1NDnapp/sj4AX
53p7RM2rHWcFc89KZ7vJMMzgmZF2v+jo960GJU7g2Nu4vEZzj8iMJCT6 BGolQRVE/
svYmrqdWpQoIJ/SCPIp//tkZ1Ko5J2JNwgO4H01ZPr+Bse3
mdznrJ33FYj2waOL8d9Km2GN3h6U8UhAS9GHUMc2IsjCF1GN6OdnC0KI s8KKshwLLKO=
[...]
;; Query time: 11 msec
;; SERVER: 127.0.0.1#53(127.0.0.1)
;; WHEN: Thu Oct  3 12:34:09 2013
;; MSG SIZE  rcvd: 8161
```



irlwinning.com

```
dig +trace irlwinning.com any
[...]
;; ANSWER SECTION:
irlwinning.com.      4045 IN  NS  ns1.irlwinning.com.
irlwinning.com.      4045 IN  NS  ns2.irlwinning.com.
irlwinning.com.      21578   IN  A   1.1.1.172
[...]
irlwinning.com.      21578   IN  A   1.1.1.170
irlwinning.com.      21578   IN  A   1.1.1.171
irlwinning.com.      73    IN  SOA ns1.irlwinning.com.
packets.irlwinning.com. 2013230901 900 900 900 900

;; ADDITIONAL SECTION:
ns1.irlwinning.com. 3647 IN  A   94.102.56.150
ns2.irlwinning.com. 3647 IN  A   94.102.56.150

;; Query time: 39 msec
;; SERVER: 199.187.216.12#53(199.187.216.12)
;; WHEN: Mon Oct  7 10:45:20 2013
;; MSG SIZE  rcvd: 4011
```



34.30.46.207.in-addr.arpa PTR

```
dig 34.30.46.207.in-addr.arpa PTR
;; Truncated, retrying in TCP mode.
[...]
;; ANSWER SECTION:
34.30.46.207.in-addr.arpa. 3600 IN PTR windowsmobilelive.gr.
34.30.46.207.in-addr.arpa. 3600 IN PTR windowsmobilelive.ie.
34.30.46.207.in-addr.arpa. 3600 IN PTR windowsmobilelive.in.
34.30.46.207.in-addr.arpa. 3600 IN PTR windowsmobilelive.com.es.
[...]
34.30.46.207.in-addr.arpa. 3600 IN PTR windowsmobilelive.com.sg.
34.30.46.207.in-addr.arpa. 3600 IN PTR windowsmobilelive.fr.

;; Query time: 14 msec
;; SERVER: 127.0.0.1#53(127.0.0.1)
;; WHEN: Thu Oct  3 12:42:31 2013
;; MSG SIZE  rcvd: 12453
```



outmail.zyngamail.com A

```
dig outmail.zyngamail.com A
[...]
;; ANSWER SECTION:
outmail.zyngamail.com.    300  IN   A    74.114.9.183
outmail.zyngamail.com.    300  IN   A    74.114.9.184
outmail.zyngamail.com.    300  IN   A    74.114.9.185
outmail.zyngamail.com.    300  IN   A    74.114.9.186
outmail.zyngamail.com.    300  IN   A    74.114.9.187
[...]
outmail.zyngamail.com.    300  IN   A    74.114.9.178
outmail.zyngamail.com.    300  IN   A    74.114.9.179
outmail.zyngamail.com.    300  IN   A    74.114.9.180
outmail.zyngamail.com.    300  IN   A    74.114.9.182

;; Query time: 19 msec
;; SERVER: 127.0.0.1#53(127.0.0.1)
;; WHEN: Thu Oct  3 12:45:01 2013
;; MSG SIZE  rcvd: 1778
```



netfirms.com

```
dig www.netfirms.com
[...]
;; ANSWER SECTION:
www.netfirms.com. 3600 IN  A      65.254.227.16

;; Query time: 104 msec
;; SERVER: 127.0.0.1#53(127.0.0.1)
;; WHEN: Thu Oct  3 12:45:47 2013
;; MSG SIZE  rcvd: 61
```



somethingstrange.netfirms.com

```
dig somethingstrange.netfirms.com
;; Truncated, retrying in TCP mode.
[...]
;; ANSWER SECTION:
somethingstrange.netfirms.com. 3600 IN A 67.23.129.35
somethingstrange.netfirms.com. 3600 IN A 67.23.129.33
somethingstrange.netfirms.com. 3600 IN A 67.23.129.32
somethingstrange.netfirms.com. 3600 IN A 67.23.129.31
somethingstrange.netfirms.com. 3600 IN A 67.23.129.30
somethingstrange.netfirms.com. 3600 IN A 67.23.129.29

;; Query time: 8 msec
;; SERVER: 127.0.0.1#53(127.0.0.1)
;; WHEN: Thu Oct  3 12:50:25 2013
;; MSG SIZE  rcvd: 4026
```



‘.’ the root

```
dig any .

[...]
;; ANSWER SECTION:

.          42321    IN  NSEC ac. NS SOA RRSIG NSEC DNSKEY
.          42321    IN  RRSIG      NSEC 8 0 86400 20131014000000
20131006230000 59085 . Ntf5bDYSPNFwQiD
+BWYxV2dfroUhPUs3tV4q20eaM5mbDfYEHuMlwr9u 1Np8wV/
uaZyzmHrqZB2XL0nKjwD3AkY1W15y+ACxEghtQAaBhbX/1xM8 L6XYr/uyfhiY/
BCnIvwW1OUoK/7m/20LIuNyiaB1YISVcloYJwwxFtYT e8s=
[...]
.          86382    IN  SOA a.root-servers.net. nstld.verisign-grs.com.
2013100701 1800 900 604800 86400
.          86382    IN  RRSIG      SOA 8 0 86400 20131014000000
20131006230000 59085 . DoGy06dHpVdSKwx9nn82m7pSZCH0g5x1/
n36+4wvKaenFLX22TS1vWYL
b0pvKZVV8dXEI4z5jqtU9XWPXurVhDw29Q2FUm7fS87T0Ve9R4lu87x
3t0pvqYB5+uqCdxVkhO1iIRROXhrMX2q253qtmfAVhtdfCeXAvoIZxBO yqk=


;; Query time: 38 msec
;; SERVER: 199.187.216.12#53(199.187.216.12)
;; WHEN: Mon Oct  7 10:50:40 2013
;; MSG SIZE  rcvd: 1649
```



Roadmap: More Things To Do

- Rate limiting at ingress
 - Based on name
 - Based on name AND FQDN
 - Truncated Responses for queries that fall outside rate limits
- Automation
 - Capture purpose built amplification domains on blocklists
 - Feeds for list/zone based filtering
- For Further Study
 - Rate limiting based on answer sizes

Thank You