

# Beating the Blockchain

## Mapping Out Decentralized Namecoin and Emercoin Infrastructure

By Kevin Perlow

### Background

The Namecoin and Emercoin blockchains are designed to provide users with takedown-resistant domain names by distributing and decentralizing DNS records across a large number of devices while incorporating technology that provides historical data integrity. These blockchains support non-ICANN Top-Level Domains (TLDs) (.bit, .coin, .bazar, .lib, and .emc) that users can communicate to via alternate DNS resolution endpoints such as OpenNIC servers.

This BlackHat 2018 whitepaper details techniques designed to:

- Proactively identify malicious domains registered using these blockchains
- Map out additional infrastructure associated with known or suspected malicious domains

### Key Findings

The generation of materials for this whitepaper resulted in the discovery of additional infrastructure related to previously reported malware families, including Dimnie, Neutrino, Smoke Loader, and Necurs. Domains and IP addresses associated with selected activity clusters are available in the appendix.

The most notable findings generated from this research pertain to the “RTM” banking malware first publicly disclosed in ESET’s “Read The Manual” report. This malware is designed to target and steal information from users of remote banking and accounting software.<sup>1</sup> Findings associated with this malware include:

- 1) Strong evidence that the threat actor has continued its operations since ESET publicly disclosed this malware in 2017. As of this writing, this included activity detected on 24 July 2018 targeting a financial officer for an administrative district in a federal subject of Russia as well as email accounts from two Russian energy suppliers and one Russian energy transporter.
- 2) Evidence that the threat actor responsible for this activity has updated its malware since its disclosure, adding additional applications to the tool’s target list.

This paper’s primary purpose is to explain and demonstrate the mapping of decentralized infrastructure; in parallel, it will also detail several aspects of the RTM malware given its relevance to this task and its use in narrowly scoped attacks. Readers are encouraged to visit ESET’s public report for a more comprehensive overview of RTM’s functionality and history.

## Technical Information

### Decentralized Systems

Decentralized DNS typically refers to a system in which DNS records are stored across a large distribution of computers, preventing changes to these records from taking place if these changes aren't collectively agreed upon. By pairing this concept with blockchain technology to provide historical data integrity, decentralized DNS operates as a takedown-resistant system for hosting records at a low cost. In recent years, various threat actors have abused this concept by configuring their malware to communicate with these decentralized domain names as well as by registering decentralized domain names that resolve to illegal "carding shops." This type of activity generally resides on two blockchains:

- 1) **Namecoin**- Namecoin was released on 18 April, 2018, allowing users to store DNS records across a decentralized blockchain. The blockchain was created in response to a bounty thread on the Bitcointalk.org forum.<sup>2</sup> Namecoin supports **.bit TLDs** and is built on top of Bitcoin technology.<sup>3</sup>
- 2) **Emercoin**- Like Namecoin, Emercoin is a digital currency that supports a decentralized DNS for the **.emc, .lib, .coin, and .bazar** zones.<sup>4</sup> Emercoin launched in 2013 and implemented its DNS in 2014.<sup>5</sup>

Each of these blockchains' functions is built upon more traditional cryptocurrency technology and each blockchain supports traditional cryptocurrency operations. As a result, concepts such as an "address" (a hashed and encoded public key for conducting transactions) and a wallet (a representation of a collection of addresses owned by a single entity)<sup>6 7</sup> apply to these blockchains and can be used to track and correlate transactions.<sup>8</sup>

Most importantly, **querying a domain registered on the Namecoin or Emercoin systems requires a DNS server specifically configured to read and resolve data hosted on these blockchains.** The most common observed method for doing this is to query an OpenNIC DNS server, as the OpenNIC project supports these TLDs.<sup>9</sup> However, other custom nameservers are occasionally used.<sup>10</sup>

### Transactional Mapping

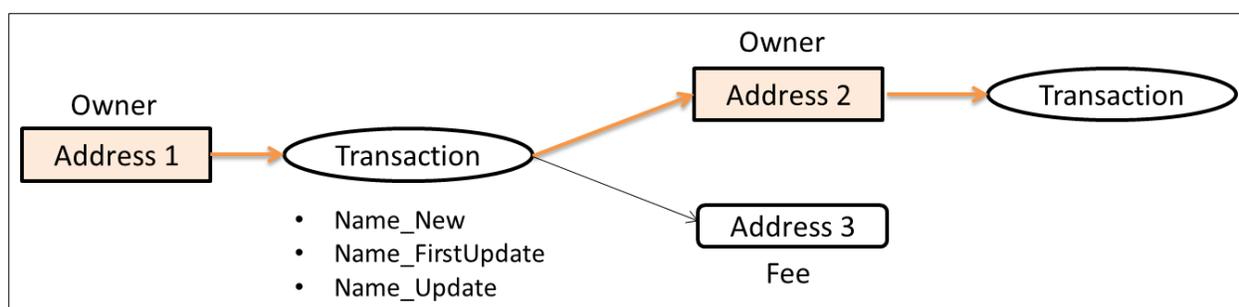
Mapping transactions on the blockchain requires a basic understanding of three concepts:

1. **Addresses**- Transactions on a blockchain revolve around the concept of *addresses*, public keys that have been hashed and encoded. Each public key is paired with a private key belonging to an individual and these keys ensure that only that individual can conduct transactions (such as currency transactions or domain operations) with the cryptocurrency assigned to them.<sup>11</sup>
2. **Blocks**- The term "blockchain" is derived from the mechanism used to append data to the decentralized database. When enough "new" data is accumulated, it is added to the blockchain in chunks. A hash of the previous chunk is included in the new dataset, permanently linking these together.<sup>12</sup>

- 3. Change-** A transaction on the blockchain requires that the *entire* amount of the output of a previous transaction be spent when it is used as an input for a new transaction. The amount leftover from a transaction is either sent to a new address (under most software configurations) or sent back to the original address.<sup>13</sup>

Transactions are broken down into “inputs” (the sender) and “outputs” (the receiving addresses). Because Namecoin domain operations require that the user pay a fixed fee, differentiating between the “change” address and the “user” address in the outputs of such a transaction is simplified.

The Namecoin blockchain supports three main types of operations: new domain creation, a domain’s first update, and a regular domain update. The following diagram illustrates how an analyst can use the concepts of addresses and change to track a user as they create and update domains on the blockchain:

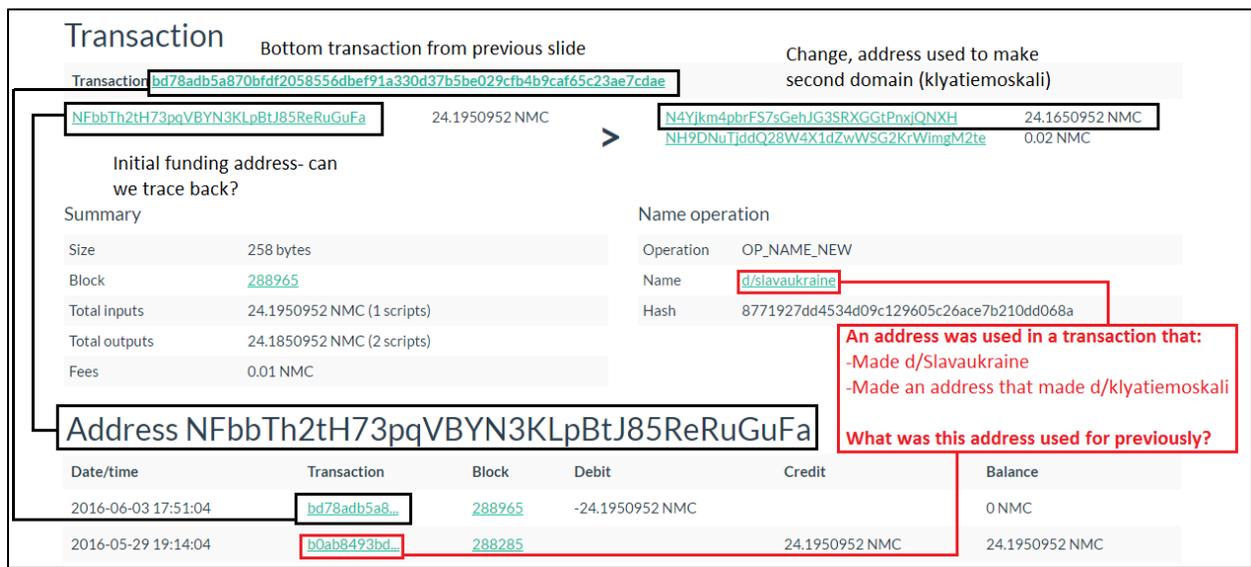


**Figure 1: A series of Namecoin transactions**

In this example, Address 1 is used to conduct an operation (such as creating a new domain). The owner pays a fee, with the leftover amount moving to Address 2, a newly created address assigned to the same individual. This individual may then use Address 2 to conduct another Namecoin operation or to conduct a financial transaction.

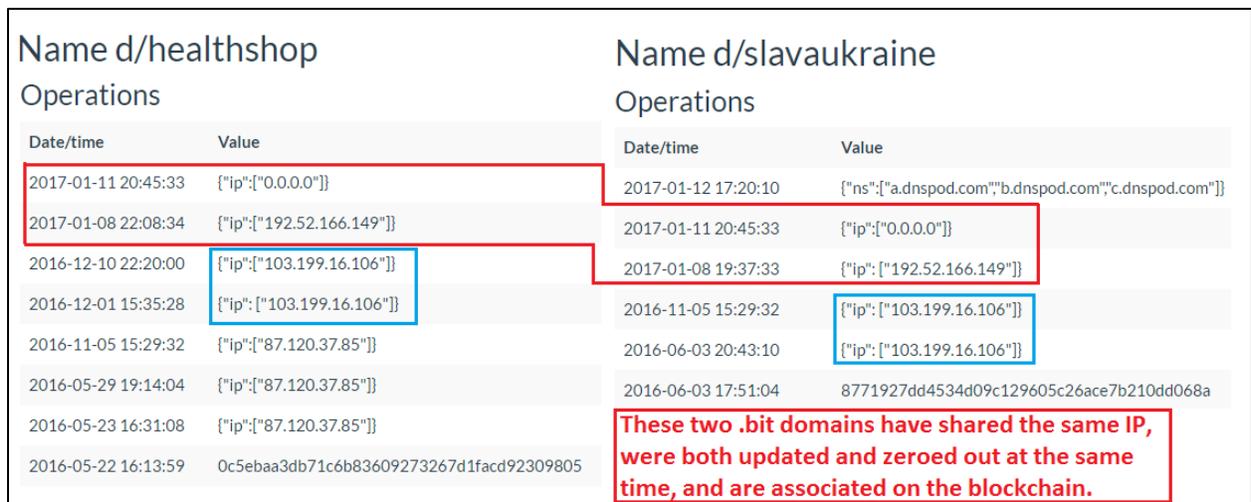
Figure 2 demonstrates the application of this analytical method using data taken directly from the Namecoin blockchain. In this example, a threat actor uses a Namecoin transaction to generate a domain later used as a Shifu banking trojan C2 (s3lavaukraine[.]bit, as reported by Palo Alto networks).<sup>14</sup> This figure depicts several items that must be considered in parallel:

- The “input” address of this transaction was previously an “output” address of an operation that updated the IP address for a domain named “healthshop[.]bit.”
- The “output” of this slavaukraine transaction is an address that is used to register an additional domain, “klyatiemoskali[.]bit,” which is also reported by Palo Alto networks as a Shifu banking trojan C2.
- The Namecoin blockchain serves as a permanent record for all historical IP addresses assigned to these domains and can be used to demonstrate infrastructure overlaps.



**Figure 2: Examination of a Namecoin transaction used to create a Shifu banking trojan C2**

A side-by-side comparison of two of these domains significantly strengthens the assessment that they belong to the same threat actor, as the domains were often assigned the same IPs on the same dates or resolved to the same IPs within the same timeframe.



**Figure 3: Side-by-side comparison of healthshop[.]bit and slavaukraine[.]bit**

This technique can be scripted, allowing analysts to scale these data collection and comparison steps. In doing so, over a dozen domains related to this threat can be identified. A full list of these domains is available in the appendix.

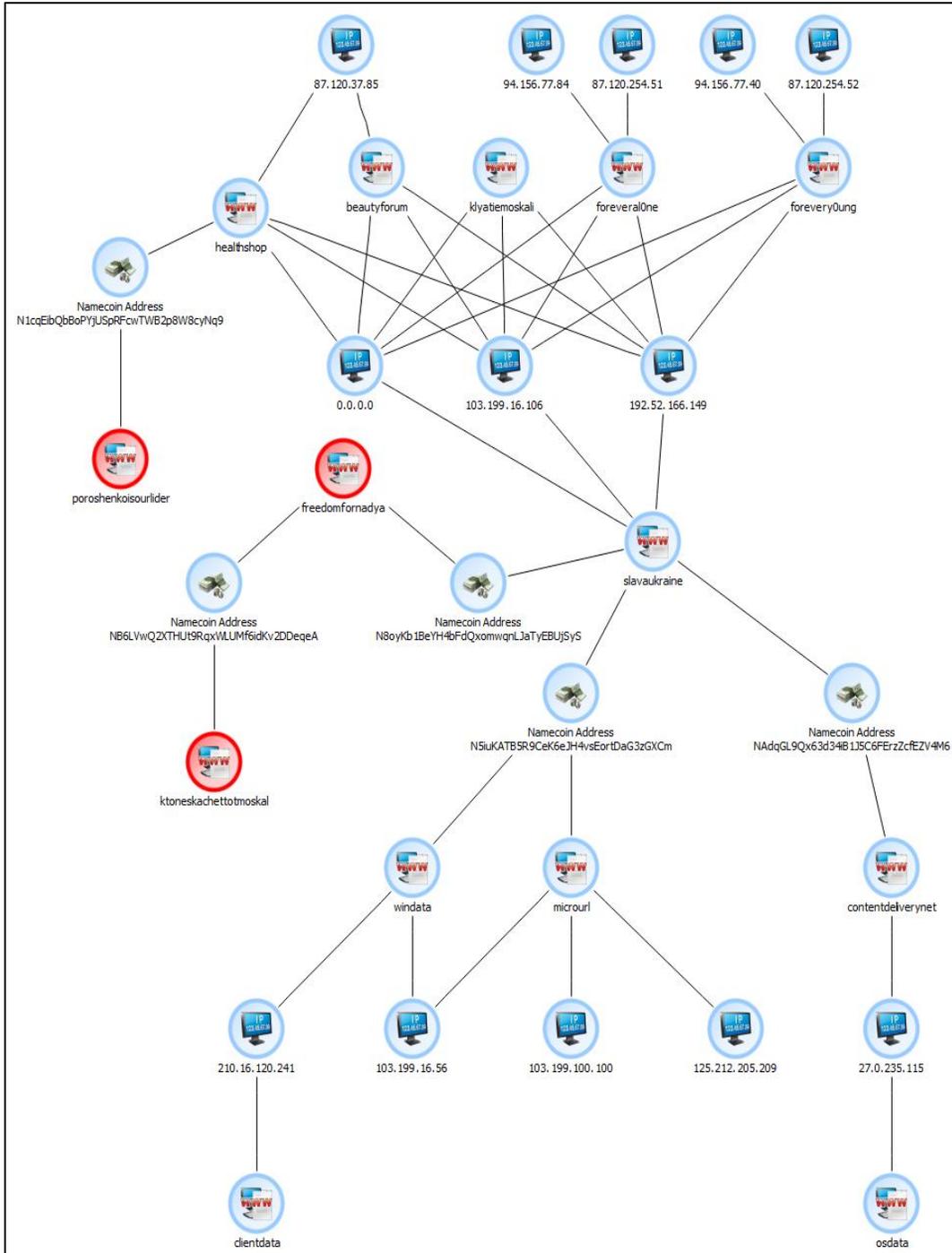


Figure 4: Infrastructure associated with Shifu banking trojan actors

## Indexing and Pivoting

The above approach serves as a high-confidence mechanism for mapping out infrastructure given the cryptographic relationships necessary to conduct activity on a blockchain; however, this method is cumbersome and requires preexisting knowledge of at least one malicious or suspicious domain.

By **indexing blockchain data using a tool such as Splunk** and combining analytics specific to blockchain technology with traditional pivoting methodologies, an analyst can *proactively* identify malicious domains and leverage Splunk's subsearching features to quickly pivot out to find additional infrastructure. This research primarily uses the following four analytics:

- 1) Domains with a large number of different historical IP address resolutions.
- 2) Domains that have operations recorded on a large number of blocks.
- 3) Domains assigned an unusual or uncommon nameserver.
- 4) Domains that were created, updated, or modified on the same or nearby block as another malicious domain.

Several of these are derived from a basic principle: it would be atypical for a legitimate user of this technology to be making frequent changes to the IP address resolution for his or her domain, as that would imply a regular changing of infrastructure and would necessitate conducting additional transactions on the blockchain. Put more simply: this would likely be an inconvenience.

Figure 5 highlights several malicious domains that emerge from a Splunk query that uses this metric (there are many valid inputs for such a query, including filtering for unique IPs and filtering out non-IP address entries). This query identified a number of suspicious domains as well as several domains that can quickly be verified as malicious and categorized via OSINT research:

- makron[.]bit (Smoke Loader)<sup>15 16</sup>
- makronwin[.]bit (Smoke Loader)<sup>17 18</sup>
- quitsmokings[.]bit (shares infrastructure with Smoke Loader)<sup>19</sup>
- sectools[.]bit (Dimnie)<sup>20 21</sup>
- vpnvirt[.]bit

A list of infrastructure identified through the pivoting techniques described in this whitepaper is available in the appendix.

megashara	36
bay	23
makron	22
bitcoincommodities	21
makronwin	20
zexernet	20
zmanhoodmana	20
bitshara	19
satoshidice	19
generationp	18
pationare	18
bitnotes	17
couchsurfing	17
levashov	17
porshegate	17
quitsmokings	17
univ	17
vinik	17
kuxkux	15
sectools	15
weihnachten	15
bitte-ein	14
black-market	14
choosenone	14
derevo	14
myblackass	14
vpnvirt	14
deltazero	13

Figure 5: Initial query to identify suspicious domains

At the time of this research and writing, vpnvirt[.]bit was uncategorized in open source, appearing only in automated sandbox reports as a DNS request. In these sandboxed runs of its parent malware, vpnvirt[.]bit is requested alongside vpnrouter[.]bit, indicating a relationship.<sup>22</sup> Querying for these two domains in the Splunk database presents the user with the IP addresses historically assigned to these domains. These include shared infrastructure and blocks (Figure 6, red) and similar infrastructure (blue).

block	Domain	DataInput
359024	volstat	83.243.41.162
360003	volstat	91.191.184.159
361797	volstat	91.191.184.33
292242	vpnrouter	08e1a96c11f141533f9763d32
292258	vpnrouter	185.61.149.70
298988	vpnrouter	185.128.42.237
299344	vpnrouter	91.215.153.31
306131	vpnrouter	213.252.247.94
309176	vpnrouter	185.25.51.25
317342	vpnrouter	213.252.246.115
323629	vpnrouter	185.25.51.221
344943	vpnrouter	185.203.118.168
346361	vpnrouter	173.242.124.228
350536	vpnrouter	103.208.86.22
353970	vpnrouter	185.99.132.51
354759	vpnrouter	169.239.129.25
292242	vpnvirt	cdd48b680f6bde040d98bae2
292254	vpnvirt	185.61.149.70
298988	vpnvirt	185.128.42.237
299344	vpnvirt	91.215.153.31
306131	vpnvirt	213.252.247.94
309186	vpnvirt	185.25.51.25
317342	vpnvirt	213.252.246.115
323637	vpnvirt	185.25.51.221
344943	vpnvirt	185.2.82.209
350536	vpnvirt	103.208.86.254
353970	vpnvirt	169.239.129.25
354759	vpnvirt	185.99.132.10
356512	vpnvirt	169.239.129.100

Figure 6: Pivoting to identify IP addresses for vpnvirt[.]bit and vpnrouter[.]bit

From this pivot, the following three IPs appear in an open source report titled “Read the Manual” from ESET researchers:<sup>23</sup>

- 185.61.149.70
- 185.128.42.237
- 91.215.153.31

These IP addresses are listed as C2 infrastructure for a malware family referred to as “RTM” (named after a decrypted string found in the malware). This malware is notable for being distributed in narrowly scoped attacks, and is designed to identify and steal information from remote banking and account management software.

As an additional pivoting step, we can strengthen the possibility that the `vpnvirt[.]bit` and `vpnrouter[.]bit` domains are associated with this malware by re-inputting (either as a separate query or through a subsearch) the IP addresses historically assigned to these domains. The result of this query will then expand the list of infrastructure to all domains associated with these IP addresses (Figure 7).

299063	checkon	213.252.247.94
298988	vpnvirt	185.128.42.237
298988	vpnvirt	185.128.42.237
298988	vpnrouter	185.128.42.237
298988	vpnrouter	185.128.42.237
297199	vpnkeep	185.128.42.237
297199	vpnkeep	185.128.42.237
296163	vpnomnet	185.128.42.237
296163	vpnomnet	185.128.42.237
296163	vpnkeep	185.128.42.237
296163	vpnkeep	185.128.42.237
292258	vpnrouter	185.61.149.70
292258	vpnrouter	185.61.149.70
292258	vpnomnet	185.61.149.70
292258	vpnomnet	185.61.149.70
292254	vpnvirt	185.61.149.70
292254	vpnvirt	185.61.149.70
292237	vpnkeep	185.61.149.70
292237	vpnkeep	185.61.149.70
291928	checkon	217.23.6.29

Figure 7: Additional pivoting

Two newly identified domains, `vpnomnet[.]bit` and `vpnkeep[.]bit`, are directly referenced in ESET’s report. In addition, changes to these domains are made in close temporal proximity with the `vpnvirt` and `vpnrouter` domains. As a result, analysts can assess with high confidence **that these two domains are related to this threat actor’s activity.**

As an additional step, analysts can reverse engineer the malware communicating with newly discovered domains in order to validate that the same malware family is being used. ESET’s “Read the Manual” report highlights several specific technical characteristics for the RTM malware, including:

- A specific export (DllGetClassObject) called to run the malware
- Unique decrypted strings, including “RTM\_Module” for which the malware is named
- Unique decrypted configuration fields such as “cc.url.1,” “botnet-prefix,” and “scan-files”
- A routine that checks window class and title names and compares them to a hardcoded list to identify remote banking and account management software. The malware sets a marker if such software is found.

Figure 8 depicts the decrypted strings identified in memory during manual debugging of the malware. These strings match those described in ESET’s report, including the malware’s configuration fields.

Address	Hex	ASCII	
00B8C3B0	65 55 72 6C 43 61 63 68 65 00 00 00 1E 00 00 00	eurIcAchE.....	<b>Decrypted Strings that Help Identify the Malware</b>
00B8C3C0	01 00 00 00 0C 00 00 00 4E 65 74 41 70 69 33 32	.....NetApi32	
00B8C3D0	2E 64 6C 6C 00 00 00 00 1A 00 00 00 01 00 00 00	..dll.....	
00B8C3E0	0B 00 00 00 4E 65 74 55 73 65 72 45 6E 75 6D 00	.....NetUserEnum.	
00B8C3F0	22 00 00 00 01 00 00 00 10 00 00 00 4E 65 74 41	.....NetA	
00B8C400	70 69 42 75 66 66 65 72 46 72 65 65 00 00 00 00	piBufferFree....	
00B8C410	1E 00 00 00 01 00 00 00 0C 00 00 00 69 70 68 6C	".....jphl	
00B8C420	70 61 70 69 2E 64 6C 6C 00 00 00 00 22 00 00 00	papi.dll.....	
00B8C430	01 00 00 00 10 00 00 00 47 65 74 4E 65 74 77 6F	.....GetNetwo	
00B8C440	72 68 50 61 72 61 6D 73 00 00 00 00 1A 00 00 00	rkParams.....	
00B8C450	01 00 00 00 09 00 00 00 53 6F 66 74 77 61 72 65	.....Software	
00B8C460	5C 00 00 00 22 00 00 00 01 00 00 00 13 00 00 00	.....	
00B8C470	6B 65 79 6C 6F 67 67 65 72 2E 6C 61 73 74 2D 64	keylogger.last-d	
00B8C480	61 74 61 00 2A 00 00 00 01 00 00 00 1A 00 00 00	ata.....	
00B8C490	6B 65 79 6C 6F 67 67 65 72 2E 6C 61 73 74 2D 77	keylogger.last-w	
00B8C4A0	6E 64 2D 63 61 70 74 69 6F 6E 00 00 26 00 00 00	nd-caption.&...	
00B8C4B0	01 00 00 00 17 00 00 00 6B 65 79 6C 6F 67 67 65	.....keylogge	
00B8C4C0	72 2E 6C 61 73 74 2D 65 78 65 2D 70 61 74 68 00	r.last-exe-path.	
00B8C4D0	1E 00 00 00 01 00 00 00 0F 00 00 00 59 6E 74 32	.....Ynt2	
00B8C4E0	6E 47 41 4F 43 67 69 6E 64 58 50 00 16 00 00 00	nGACgindXP....	
00B8C4F0	03 00 00 00 07 00 00 00 30 2E 32 2E 35 2E 34 00	.....0.2.5.4.	
00B8C500	1E 00 00 00 01 00 00 00 0D 00 00 00 62 6F 74 6E	.....botn	
00B8C510	65 74 2D 70 72 65 66 69 78 00 00 00 1A 00 00 00	et-prefix.....	
00B8C520	01 00 00 00 09 00 00 00 62 6F 74 6E 65 74 2D 69	.....botnet-i	
00B8C530	64 00 00 00 22 00 00 00 01 00 00 00 13 00 00 00	d.....	
00B8C540	63 63 2E 63 6F 6E 6E 65 63 74 2D 69 6E 74 65 72	cc.connect-inter	
00B8C550	76 61 6C 00 2A 00 00 00 01 00 00 00 1A 00 00 00	val.....	
00B8C560	47 65 74 53 79 73 74 65 6D 44 65 66 61 75 6C 74	GetSystemDefaul	
00B8C570	55 49 4C 61 6E 67 75 61 67 65 00 00 1E 00 00 00	UILanguage.....	
00B8C580	01 00 00 00 0C 00 00 00 52 54 4D 5F 4D 6F 64 75	.....RTM_Modu	
00B8C590	6C 65 45 50 00 00 00 00 1A 00 00 00 01 00 00 00	IEFP.....	
00B8C5A0	0A 00 00 00 73 63 61 6E 2D 66 69 6C 65 73 00 00	....scan-files..	

**Figure 8: Decrypted RTM strings**

Figure 9 provides functional validation. In the top code block, the malware attempts to determine whether or not the string “E-Plat” appears in the current window title. E-Plat refers to account and salary management software owned by B&N Bank (БИНБАНК), an Eastern European financial institution.<sup>24</sup> If this software is found, the malware sets a marker for MDM bank (acquired by B&N in 2015/2016 and still referenced in some E-Plat documentation<sup>25</sup>). If not, it jumps to the next check.

This check also aligns with ESET’s high-level description of the malware’s functionality, providing final validation that the malware identified through this infrastructure pivoting is indeed attributable to the same threat actor group and activities. Notably, ESET’s report does not mention the “E-Plat” software as being among the targeted platforms, suggesting that the threat actors may have updated their malware to target new software.

```

0002_dropped_d11.009CD548
lea eax, dword ptr ss:[ebp-10C]
mov edx, dword ptr ds:[esi+1FC] ; [esi+1FC]: L"\E-P]at\"
call 0002_dropped_d11.9B3560
mov eax, dword ptr ss:[ebp-10C]
mov edx, dword ptr ss:[ebp-8] ; [ebp-8]: "x32dbg - File: rundll32.exe - PID: F08 - Module: 0002_dropped_d11.d11 - Thread: 6F8"
test eax, eax
jle 0002_dropped_d11.9CD599

0002_dropped_d11.009CD56B
mov edx, 25 ; 25: '%'
mov eax, ebx
call 0002_dropped_d11.9CC2C0
test al, al
je 0002_dropped_d11.9CD599

0002_dropped_d11.009CD578
mov eax, dword ptr ds:[9D9DC4]
mov eax, dword ptr ds:[eax+2C0]
push eax
call dword ptr ds:[ebx+124]
mov edx, 25 ; 25: '%'
mov eax, ebx
call 0002_dropped_d11.9CD128

0002_dropped_d11.009CD599
lea eax, dword ptr ss:[ebp-1E0]
mov edx, dword ptr ds:[esi+200] ; [esi+200]: "ALBO -"
call 0002_dropped_d11.9B3560
mov eax, dword ptr ss:[ebp-1E0]
mov edx, dword ptr ss:[ebp-8] ; [ebp-8]: "x32dbg - File: rundll32.exe - PID: F08 - Module: 0002_dropped_d11.d11 - Thread: 6F8"
call 0002_dropped_d11.9B3804
test eax, eax
jle 0002_dropped_d11.9CD5EA

```

EAX	00BBE1B4	"MDM"
EBX	00BBF2B0	
ECX	00000001	
EDX	00000025	'%'
EBP	00EBFFA0	
ESP	00EBFD84	
ESI	009DAE00	&L"D2"
EDI	000000C4	'A'
EIP	009CD586	0002_dropped_d11.009CD586

Figure 9: Software check performed by RTM malware (note that a jump to the “successful” check was forced to generate the condition needed to place the “MDM” marker in the EAX register).

During reverse engineering, one additional notable characteristic was identified. While the malware will make DNS requests using OpenNIC servers, it will also make a direct GET request to a domain’s page on Namecha[.]in, a public Namecoin blockchain database. The malware will pull down the most recent IP address for the domain and use this in place of DNS resolution should traditional mechanisms be unavailable.

```

0098D044 push eax
0098D045 mov eax, dword ptr ss:[ebp+C]
0098D048 push eax
0098D049 mov eax, dword ptr ss:[ebp-C]
0098D04D push eax
0098D04E mov eax, dword ptr ds:[9D9E18]
0098D053 mov eax, dword ptr ds:[eax]
0098D055 call eax
0098D057 mov dword ptr ss:[ebp-8], eax
0098D05A cmp dword ptr ss:[ebp-8], 0
0098D05E je 0002_dropped_d11.9B020A
0098D064 cmp dword ptr ss:[ebp+14], 2
0098D068 je 0002_dropped_d11.9B0086
0098D06A mov dword ptr ss:[ebp-14], 3300
0098D071 push 4
0098D073 lea eax, dword ptr ss:[ebp-14]
0098D076 push eax
0098D077 push 1F
0098D079 mov eax, dword ptr ss:[ebp-8]
0098D07C push eax
0098D07D mov eax, dword ptr ds:[9D9E04]
0098D082 mov eax, dword ptr ds:[eax]
0098D084 call eax
0098D086 cmp dword ptr ss:[ebp+18], 1
0098D08A je 0002_dropped_d11.9B00C9

```

[ebp+C]: L"/name/d/dotbitdream"

[ebp-C]: L"GET"

eax: WinHttpOpenRequest

[ebp-8]: L"dotbitdream"

EAX	40513D2C	<winhttp.WinHttpOpenRequest>
EBX	0104FEDF	
ECX	00000000	
EDX	014A800C	"namecha.in"
EBP	0104FE98	
ESP	0104FE54	
ESI	014A3000	
EDI	014A3100	
EIP	0098D055	0002_dropped_d11.0098D055

0104FE54	014A3100	
0104FE58	0009AB74	"GET"
0104FE5C	00088AE4	"/name/d/dotbitdream"
0104FE60	0009AC5C	"HTTP/1.1"
0104FE64	00000000	
0104FE68	00000000	
0104FE6C	00800108	
0104FE70	000C3914	L"dotbitdream.bit"
0104FE74	0104FF3C	&"192.168.180.128"
0104FE78	000C2914	L"dotbitdream.bit"

Figure 10: GET request to Namecha[.]in to resolve the IP for an RTM C2

## *Emercoin*

These pivoting techniques are also applicable to the Emercoin blockchain. For example, pivoting using Jstash[.]bazar (a well-known domain for the Jokerstash carding website) leads to several related domains and IP addresses:

- 185.61.137.166
- 185.61.137.177
- 185.62.190.164
- 190.115.27.130
- cvv[.]bazar
- cvv2[.]bazar
- dumps[.]bazar
- j-stash[.]bazar
- joker-stash[.]bazar
- jokerstash[.]bazar
- stash[.]bazar
- track2[.]bazar

Similarly, the Neutrino C2 “brownsloboz”<sup>26</sup> appears on both blockchains with multiple registered TLDs. By using the IP addresses from one blockchain, an analyst can pivot *across* indexed blockchains through a Splunk subsearch, revealing the following infrastructure:

- 46.183.218.42
- 185.234.216.58
- brownsloboz[.]bit
- weare[.]bit
- porfavor[.]bit
- brownsloboz[.]bazar
- brownsloboz[.]lib
- brownsloboz[.]emc

## Analytical Limitations

### *Expired Infrastructure*

Whereas the transactional analysis method provides reactive but cryptographically-backed results leading to high-confidence infrastructure relationships, the infrastructure mapping methodology provides faster results and easier pivoting; however, it has analytical limitations. As an example, mapping out infrastructure related to cash-money-analitica[.]bit, an additional ESET-identified RTM C2, leads to several additional domains:

323066	xoonday	46.8.44.23
323066	volstat	164.132.225.173
323066	volstat	164.132.225.173
323066	lookstat	164.132.225.173
323066	lookstat	164.132.225.173
323066	sysmonitor	164.132.225.173
323066	sysmonitor	164.132.225.173
322817	leomoon	46.8.44.23
322817	leomoon	46.8.44.23
322817	firststat	46.8.44.23
322817	firststat	46.8.44.23
322817	fooming	46.8.44.23
322817	fooming	46.8.44.23
318404	feb96eb2aa59	109.236.82.150
315814	feb96eb2aa59	5.154.191.225
315038	feb96eb2aa59	91.207.7.69
314935	cash-money-analitica	91.207.7.69

**Figure 11: Domains identified by pivoting using cash-money-analitica[.]bit**

One of these domains, feb96eb2aa59[.]bit, is cited by ESET researchers as an RTM C2. However, further analysis (using a Splunk “values” statistical transformation) indicates that the other domains only have a single IP address overlap with these RTM C2s, along with a one-year gap between when each cluster was assigned this IP address (Figure 9).

185.151.245.34	fooming xoonday	
185.169.229.42	cash-money-analitica money-cash-analitica	
185.212.128.146	leomoon	
185.43.223.28	leomoon	
188.116.40.44	firststat leomoon testikname volstat	
188.138.71.117	cash-money-analitica fooming leomoon money-cash-analitica volstat	308601 352362
193.242.211.137	fooming leomoon lookstat xoonday	

_time	block	Domain	DataInput
2016-10-09 20:14:49	308601	money-cash-analitica	188.138.71.117
2016-10-09 20:14:49	308601	cash-money-analitica	188.138.71.117
2017-07-22 21:44:29	352362	fooming	188.138.71.117
2017-07-22 21:44:29	352362	fooming	188.138.71.117
2017-07-22 21:44:29	352362	leomoon	188.138.71.117
2017-07-22 21:44:29	352362	leomoon	188.138.71.117
2017-07-22 21:44:29	352362	volstat	188.138.71.117
2017-07-22 21:44:29	352362	volstat	188.138.71.117

**Figure 9: Additional analysis on cash-money-analitica[.]bit infrastructure relationships**

OSINT reporting from FireEye researchers associates domains in this additional cluster (such as `xoonday[.]bit` and `volstat[.]bit`) with a malware family tracked as CHESSYLITE.<sup>27</sup> Reverse engineering and analysis of a malware sample communicating with these domains<sup>28</sup> indicates that it contains a SOCKS5 module common to several other malware families and that the malware will eventually attempt brute force logins to several APIs using a hardcoded dictionary of stolen credentials.

Given the limited direct and temporal overlaps with the known RTM C2s and this clear difference in functionality, it is likely that these domains are unrelated to the RTM malware or threat actors. Most importantly, this example demonstrates that each additional “layer” of pivoting lowers the confidence level of infrastructure relationships in the absence of additional corroborating data and analysis.

### *Nameserver Delegation*

In some cases, threat actors add an NS record in lieu of an IP address when configuring their infrastructure. For example, the Gandcrab C2 “`nomoreransom[.]bit`”<sup>29</sup> is assigned “`dns1[.]soprodns[.]ru`” and “`dns2[.]soprodns[.]ru`” without an IP address. This prevents an analyst from easily identifying and blocking an IP address associated with this malware. Possible solutions to this obstacle include:

- A daily script that performs a DNS query to these name servers to identify and index these IPs
- Parsing PCAP data from blogs that regularly track these threats, such as Malware-Traffic-Analysis<sup>30</sup>

In addition, the use of more unique nameservers can itself expose additional infrastructure. The following domains use a “soprodns” nameserver:

- `esetnod32[.]bit`
- `nomoreransom[.]bit`
- `emsisoft[.]bit`
- `gandcrab[.]bit`
- `bleepingcomputer[.]bit`
- `kimchenin[.]bit`
- `spinner[.]bit`
- `xylibox[.]bit`
- `sophos[.]bit`
- `mitnicksecurity[.]bit`
- `cryptoinsane[.]bit`
- `securityweekly[.]bit`
- `darkreading[.]bit`

Several of these are widely reported Gandcrab ransomware C2s; of the others, several are also named after security companies, researchers, or publications, suggesting that they may also be related.

### **Conclusions**

In recent years, several malware families have adopted decentralized infrastructure to create takedown-resistant domains. This paper has highlighted how analysts can use several characteristics of blockchain technology to map out and identify suspicious or malicious domains and nameservers. These include using the cryptographic nature of blockchain transactions to create high-confidence relationships as well as leveraging pivoting techniques against an indexed dataset. In addition to these more CTI-oriented techniques, analysts can also monitor for DNS queries to non-standard nameservers, including OpenNIC IP addresses, as a potential indicator of anomalous activity.

## Appendix: Selected Clusters

Note: These lists *do not* include the time ranges for when this infrastructure was active. Researchers are encouraged to visit Namecha[.]in to query domains for this information.

### Dimnie<sup>31 32 33</sup>

- avtotransltd[.]bit • 103.208.86.65 • 195.123.224.193
- bitmakler[.]bit • 104.193.8.12 • 195.123.224.83
- coinsolutions[.]bit • 107.181.187.39 • 195.123.224.87
- cryptobase[.]bit • 109.201.142.101 • 195.123.225.28
- generationp[.]bit • 109.201.148.85 • 195.123.233.138
- gosmos[.]bit • 162.213.26.82 • 195.123.233.150
- investorshub[.]bit • 185.147.34.78 • 195.123.233.162
- newmotors[.]bit • 185.25.51.177 • 195.123.233.173
- oneindexers[.]bit • 185.61.149.159 • 195.123.233.180
- oxfordcontractors[.]bit • 185.82.217.156 • 195.123.233.229
- porshegate[.]bit • 185.82.218.111 • 195.123.233.243
- sonygame[.]bit • 185.82.219.105 • 199.115.228.44
- worldmed[.]bit • 185.99.132.11 • 199.168.139.214
- 103.208.86.10 • 185.99.132.110 • 5.34.183.254
- 103.208.86.172 • 185.99.132.45 • 86.106.131.71
- 103.208.86.205 • 192.99.81.69 • 87.120.37.42
- 103.208.86.219 • 195.123.214.74 • 87.121.52.185
- 103.208.86.224 • 195.123.216.23 • 92.87.236.203
- 103.208.86.3 • 195.123.217.227
- 103.208.86.57 • 195.123.218.177

### Shifu

- microurl[.]bit • contentdeliverynet[.]bit • 103.199.16.106
- beautyforum[.]bit • osdata[.]bit • 94.156.77.40
- healthshop[.]bit • clientdata[.]bit • 94.156.77.84
- windata[.]bit • 125.212.205[.]209 • 210.16.120.241
- foreveralOne[.]bit • 103.199.16.56 • 103.199.100.100
- foreveryOung[.]bit • 87.120.37.85 • 27.0.235.115
- klyatiemoskali[.]bit • 87.120.254.51 • 192.52.166.149
- slavaukraine[.]bit • 87.120.254.52

## RTM

*Mail-RU Cluster (associated with **active** RTM domains at the time of this publication)*

- 149.202.30.7
- 185.82.219.79
- 195.123.217.232
- 195.123.217.242
- 195.123.225.58
- 5.149.255.199
- 5.149.255.217
- 54.38.49.245
- mail-ru-stat[.]bit
- mail-ru-stat-cdn[.]bit
- mail-ru-stat-counter[.]bit
- mail-ru-stat-counter-cdn[.]bit

*fde05d0573da Cluster*

- 109.248.32.149
- 109.248.32.152
- 138.201.104.161
- 154.70.153.125
- 158.255.208.197
- 158.255.6.150
- 178.208.91.222
- 185.117.88.123
- 185.117.89.112
- 185.141.25.167
- 185.82.201.45
- 212.48.90.155
- 213.184.127.137
- 5.149.248.164
- 5.154.190.153
- 5.154.190.167
- 5.154.190.168
- 5.154.190.189
- 5.154.191.154
- 5.154.191.174
- 5.154.191.244
- 5.154.191.246
- 50.7.115.64
- 81.19.82.8
- 85.25.41.84
- 86.110.117.5
- 86.110.117.6
- 95.183.52.182
- b9d0f3a3[.]bit
- d47ea26b7faa[.]bit
- dotbitdream[.]bit
- f06f77c950a9cf20c[.]bit
- fde05d0573da[.]bit
- hfh4795hdsk[.]bit
- ltst0105xht0[.]bit
- onewayticket[.]bit

*VPN Cluster*

- 103.208.86.122
- 103.208.86.158
- 103.208.86.254
- 142.0.33.15
- 169.239.129.100
- 169.239.129.25
- 173.242.124.228
- 185.128.42.237
- 185.2.82.209
- 185.203.118.168
- 185.25.51.221
- 185.25.51.25
- 185.61.149.70
- 185.99.132.10
- 185.99.132.51
- 199.180.119.19
- 199.180.119.20
- 213.252.246.115
- 213.252.247.94
- 217.23.6.29
- 91.215.153.31
- applerok[.]bit
- bigleon[.]bit
- checkon[.]bit
- djslon[.]bit
- vpnkeep[.]bit
- vpnomnet[.]bit
- vpnrooter[.]bit
- vpnvirt[.]bit

*Analitica Cluster*

- 131.72.138.169
- 185.141.27.249
- 185.169.229.42
- 188.138.71.117
- 200.74.240.134
- 200.74.240.80
- 37.1.206.78
- 5.154.191.57
- 91.207.7.69
- 93.170.168.218
- 93.190.139.66
- cash-money-analitica[.]bit
- money-cash-analitica[.]bit

- 
- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.welivesecurity.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Read-The-Manual.pdf>
  - <sup>2</sup> <https://bitcointalk.org/index.php?topic=6017>
  - <sup>3</sup> <https://bit.namecoin.org/>
  - <sup>4</sup> <https://peername.com/emercoin/>
  - <sup>5</sup> <https://emergoin.com/en/road-map>
  - <sup>6</sup> <https://blockgeeks.com/guides/blockchain-address-101/>
  - <sup>7</sup> <https://bitcoin.stackexchange.com/questions/13059/whats-the-difference-between-a-wallet-and-an-address>
  - <sup>8</sup> <https://www.sans.org/summit-archives/file/summit-archive-1498165491.pdf>
  - <sup>9</sup> <https://www.opennic.org/>
  - <sup>10</sup> <https://researchcenter.paloaltonetworks.com/2017/01/unit42-2016-updates-shifu-banking-trojan/>
  - <sup>11</sup> <https://blockgeeks.com/guides/blockchain-address-101/>
  - <sup>12</sup> <https://blockgeeks.com/guides/what-is-hashing/>
  - <sup>13</sup> <https://en.bitcoin.it/wiki/Change>
  - <sup>14</sup> <https://researchcenter.paloaltonetworks.com/2017/01/unit42-2016-updates-shifu-banking-trojan/>
  - <sup>15</sup> <https://cloudblogs.microsoft.com/microsoftsecure/2018/04/04/hunting-down-dofail-with-windows-defender-atp/>
  - <sup>16</sup> <https://www.hybrid-analysis.com/sample/b75ee6221a09097bde66e5668f6a74c7a968d247b084a339d2a5a2921f41c702?environmentId=100>
  - <sup>17</sup> <https://cloudblogs.microsoft.com/microsoftsecure/2018/04/04/hunting-down-dofail-with-windows-defender-atp/>
  - <sup>18</sup> <https://www.hybrid-analysis.com/sample/b75ee6221a09097bde66e5668f6a74c7a968d247b084a339d2a5a2921f41c702?environmentId=100>
  - <sup>19</sup> <https://www.malware-traffic-analysis.net/2017/11/02/index.html>
  - <sup>20</sup> <https://researchcenter.paloaltonetworks.com/2017/03/unit42-dimnie-hiding-plain-sight/>
  - <sup>21</sup> <https://www.hybrid-analysis.com/sample/a8ba70be73578d901c5e2427fd2f63e06801dcba8726a82f1875d84ba147aaa3/58a56f1faac2edca060d6cde>
  - <sup>22</sup> <https://www.reverse.it/sample/cfa9e166e70ca46abd21bd7a30e5569bed7e0b22107d6f2a3bbff097b3891e06?environmentId=100>
  - <sup>23</sup> <https://www.welivesecurity.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Read-The-Manual.pdf>
  - <sup>24</sup> <https://www.binbank.ru/corporate-clients/dbo/eplat/>
  - <sup>25</sup> <https://eng.binbank.ru/news/binbank-news/44812/>
  - <sup>26</sup> <https://www.fireeye.com/blog/threat-research/2018/04/cryptocurrencies-cyber-crime-blockchain-infrastructure-use.html>
  - <sup>27</sup> <https://www.fireeye.com/blog/threat-research/2018/04/cryptocurrencies-cyber-crime-blockchain-infrastructure-use.html>
  - <sup>28</sup> <https://www.hybrid-analysis.com/sample/68c746df7df35b3379a4d679fc210abdb2032b3c076ec51a463abe1e0e18345f?environmentId=100>
  - <sup>29</sup> <https://www.symantec.com/security-center/writeup/2018-013106-5656-99>
  - <sup>30</sup> <https://www.malware-traffic-analysis.net/2018/01/29/index.html>
  - <sup>31</sup> <https://researchcenter.paloaltonetworks.com/2017/03/unit42-dimnie-hiding-plain-sight/>
  - <sup>32</sup> <https://habr.com/company/bizone/blog/351122/>
  - <sup>33</sup> <https://securelist.ru/trojan-dimnie-and-ransomware-purga/90272/>