

# DNSSEC Musings

Diginotar, DANE,  
and Deployment


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Acknowledgements:  
Jakob Schlyter  
Geoff Huston  
Dan Kaminsky

Olaf Kolkman  
NLnet Labs

- I have an agenda; I want an Internet that is:
  - resilient
  - secure
  - open
  - sustainable
  - trustworthy





# 101

All the basics you need to  
know

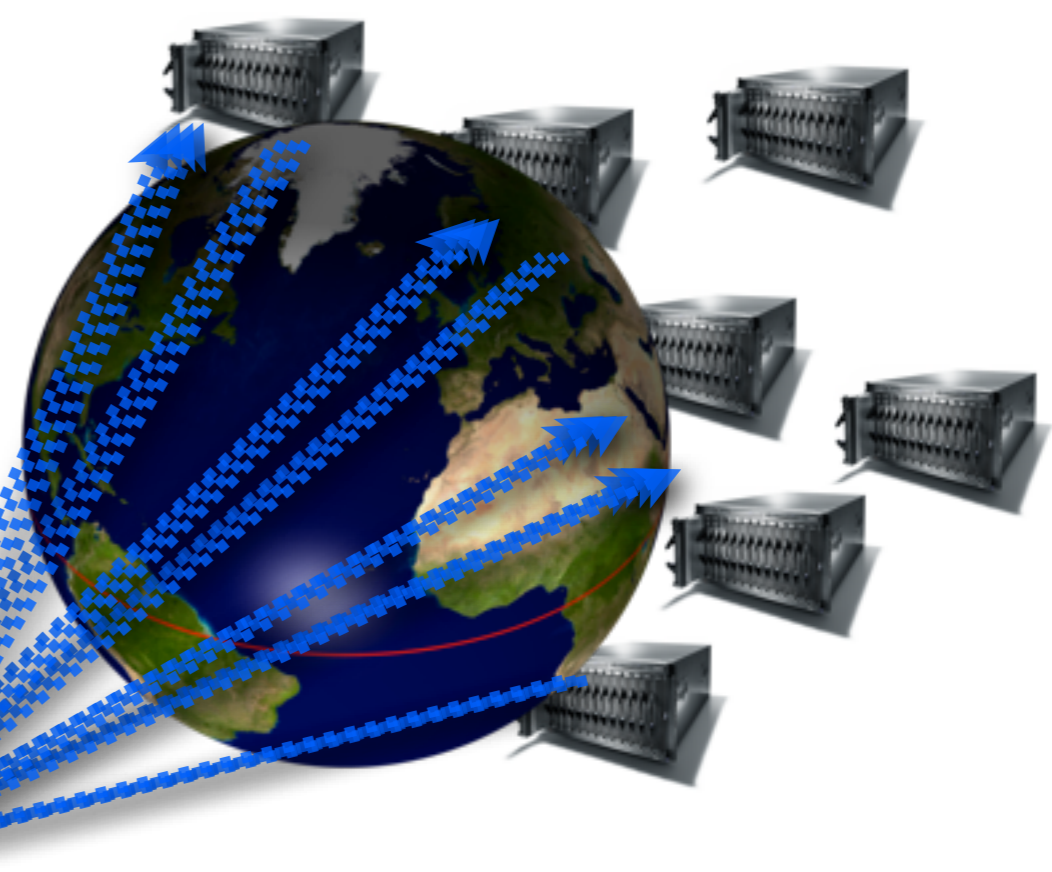
# DNS

## Basics: The Domain Name System

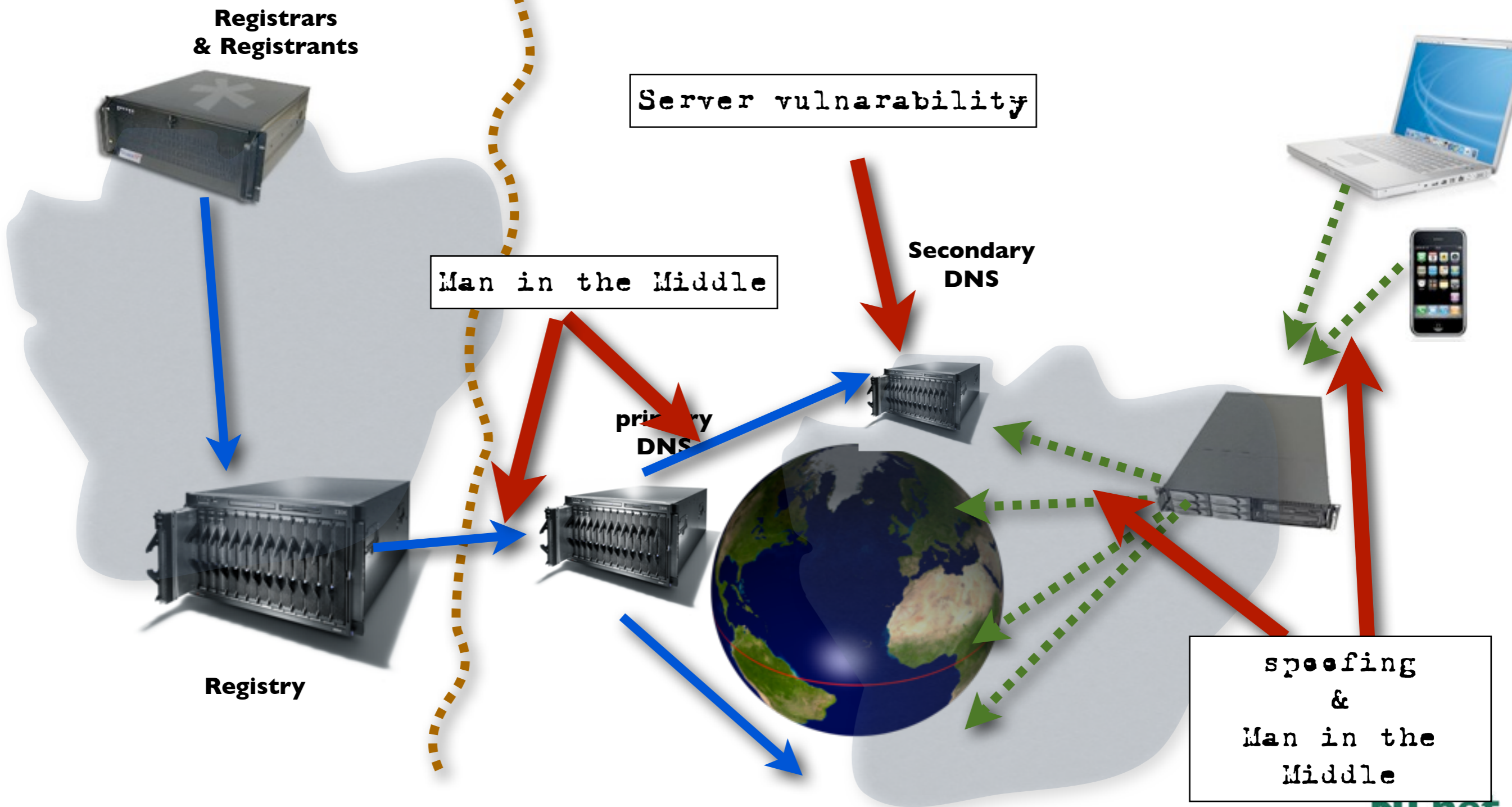
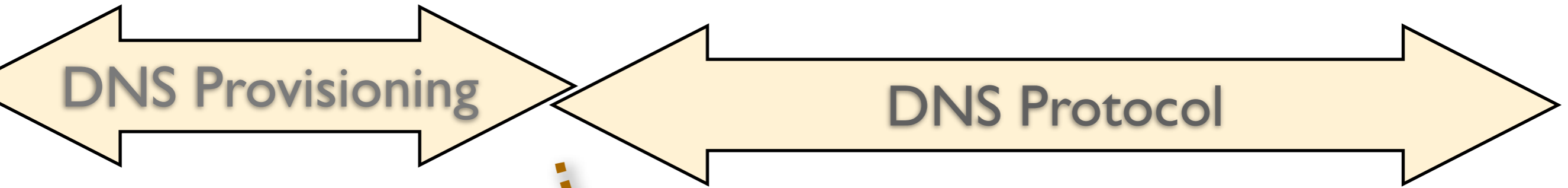


Telephone book of the Internet

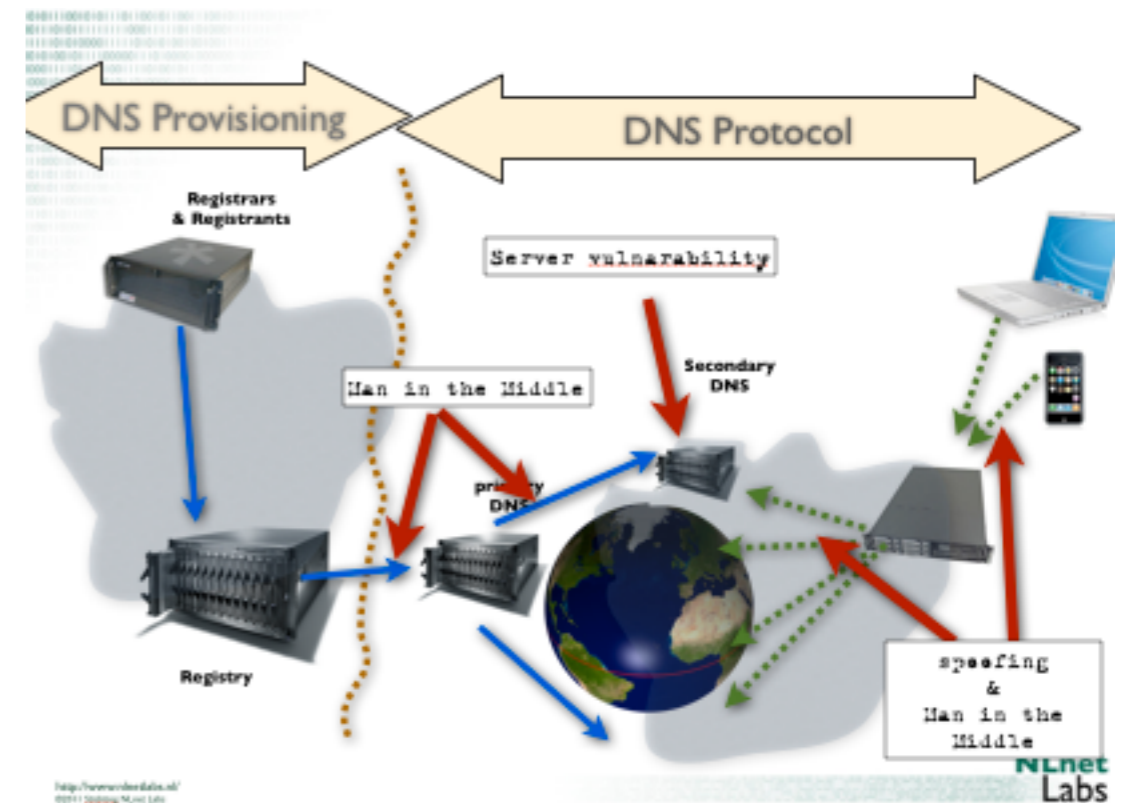
The thing that translates www.NLnetLabs.nl into an service location



Highly resilient, global, scalable.





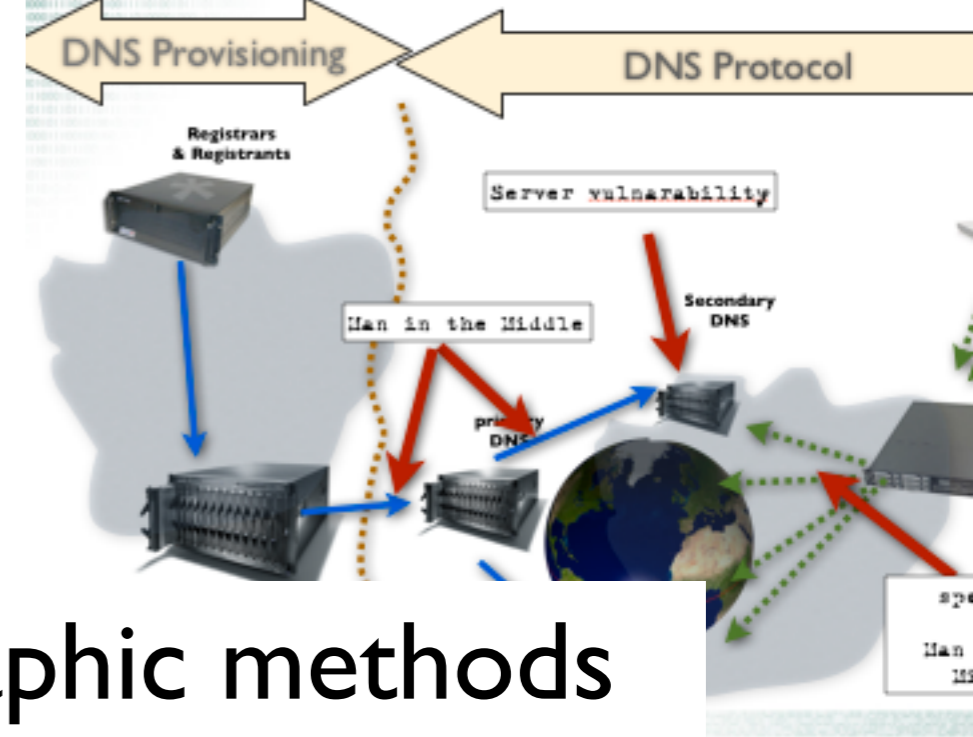


- Summary:
  - Vulnerabilities in the provisioning side
  - Vulnerabilities in the delivery (DNS protocol and infrastructure)

# DNSSEC

without the details

# DNSSEC



- DNSSEC provides cryptographic methods to validate the integrity and authenticity of messages sent by the DNS protocol.
- Integrity is the property that a message has not been altered, or tampered with.
- Authenticity knows that you can validate the publisher of the message is the 'zone owner'.



**Internet**

**PKI**

- Certification assert authenticity of public key material.
- Authenticity of Certificate forms the basis for integrity and confidentiality of SSL and TLS
- only widely deployed security technology on the Internet and depends to a great extent on trust in a set of specific 3rd parties: The registration authorities.
- We will talk about the role of these registration authorities later in this presentation.

In this context technology to assert authenticity.

Provides a basis for integrity and confidentiality of connections

Depends on trust in specific 3rd parties: Registration and Certificate Authorities

# TRANSITIVE TRUST

- Trust a certain browser vendor (OS vendor) results in
- Trust in Certification Authorities
- Signatures over service names provided by CAs result in browsers trusting those services.

If one of the entities in this chain breaks trust then the trust breaks down.



*Ali and his magic Browser  
how failure in technology and compliance  
almost brought misery and doom*

In this chapter of the presentation we talk about “Ali” and how his browser settings disclosed a major problem and caused a scandal.



September 2011



# This is the story of DigiNotar: A Dutch X509 Certificate Authority



A Bankrupt  
Certificate  
Authority



HOME ACTUEEL PROD

KLANTENSERVICE OVER DIGINOTAR



documenten online uitwisselen  
Hoe toont u aan dat uw document de originele en geautoriseerde versie is en dat het bij de juiste persoon komt?  
Meer >>

Certificaten Contact FAQ

Ga direct naar ...

- Digitale Polis
- Elektronische handtekening WABO

DigiNotar®, Internet Trust Provider

Dé onafhankelijke partij voor het identificeren van personen en organisaties op internet en veilig digitaal documenten uitwisselen, ondertekenen en

Actueel

> **Faillissement DigiNotar**

De Rechtbank Haarlem heeft op dinsdag 20 september 2011 het faillissement uitgesproken van Diginotar B.V. onder aanstelling van mr. R. Mulder tot cura...

> **DigiNotar failliet. Overheid blijft betrokken bij operationeel beheer**

DigiNotar used to be a Certificate Authority.

In fact it was the CA that was the preferred provider to the Dutch government. Many municipal services websites, inter-governmental backend services, etc where secured by DigiNotar certificates.

The events that are described below lead to its bankruptcy.



# Iranian activists feel the chill as hacker taps into e-mails

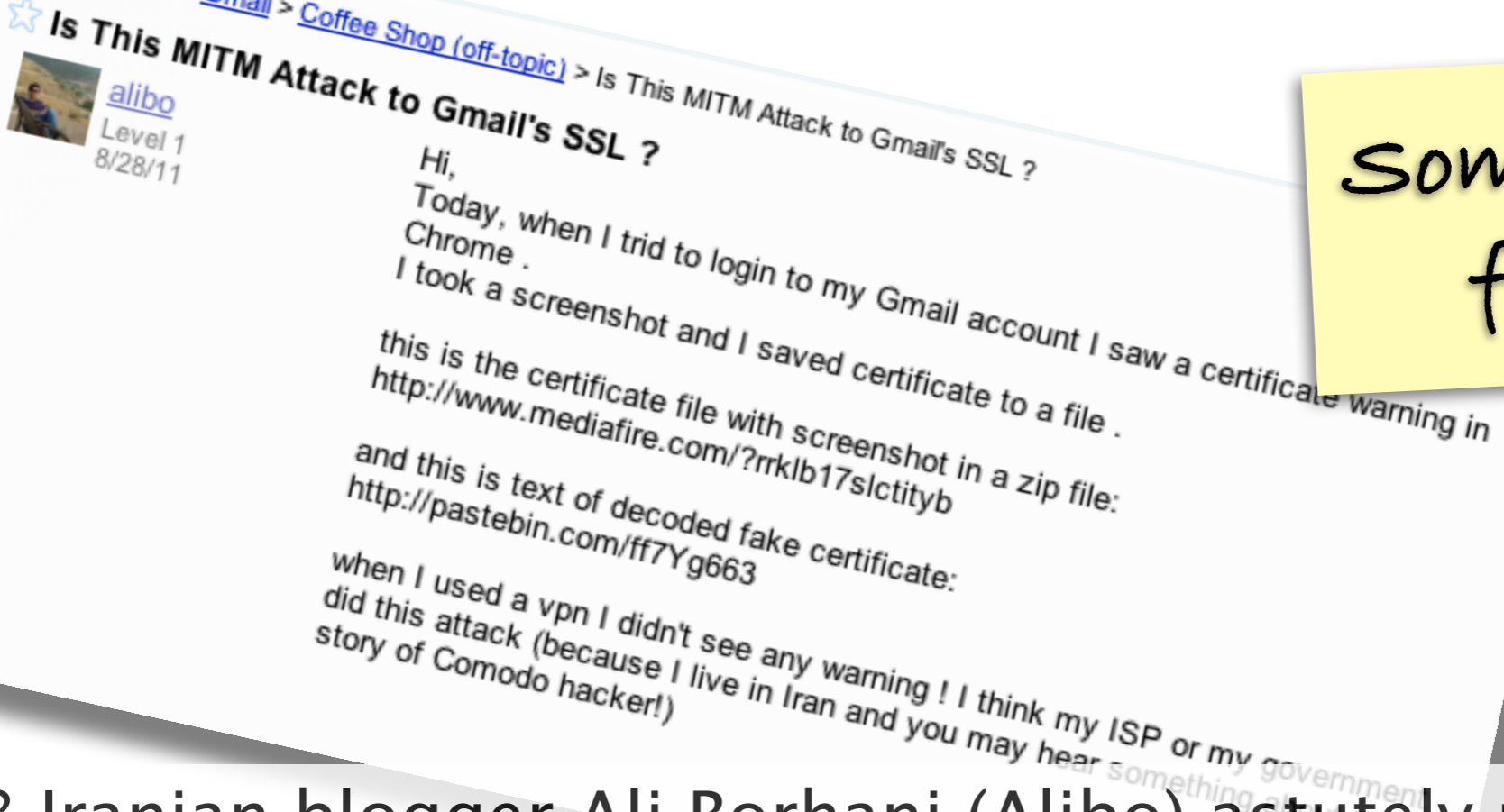
Front-Page  
News

The title of the chapter refers to Ali Bornhani.

The quote in the Tribune reads: “He (Ali Borhani ) claims to be a 21 years old, a student of software engineering in Tehran who reveres Ayatolla ALi Khamanei and despises dissidents in his country.”



Events  
chain of ~~trust~~



28 Aug 2011

August 28 Iranian blogger Ali Borhani (Alibo) astutely noticed fake certificate. He posted the warning message that his Chrome browser showed to a Gmail forum.

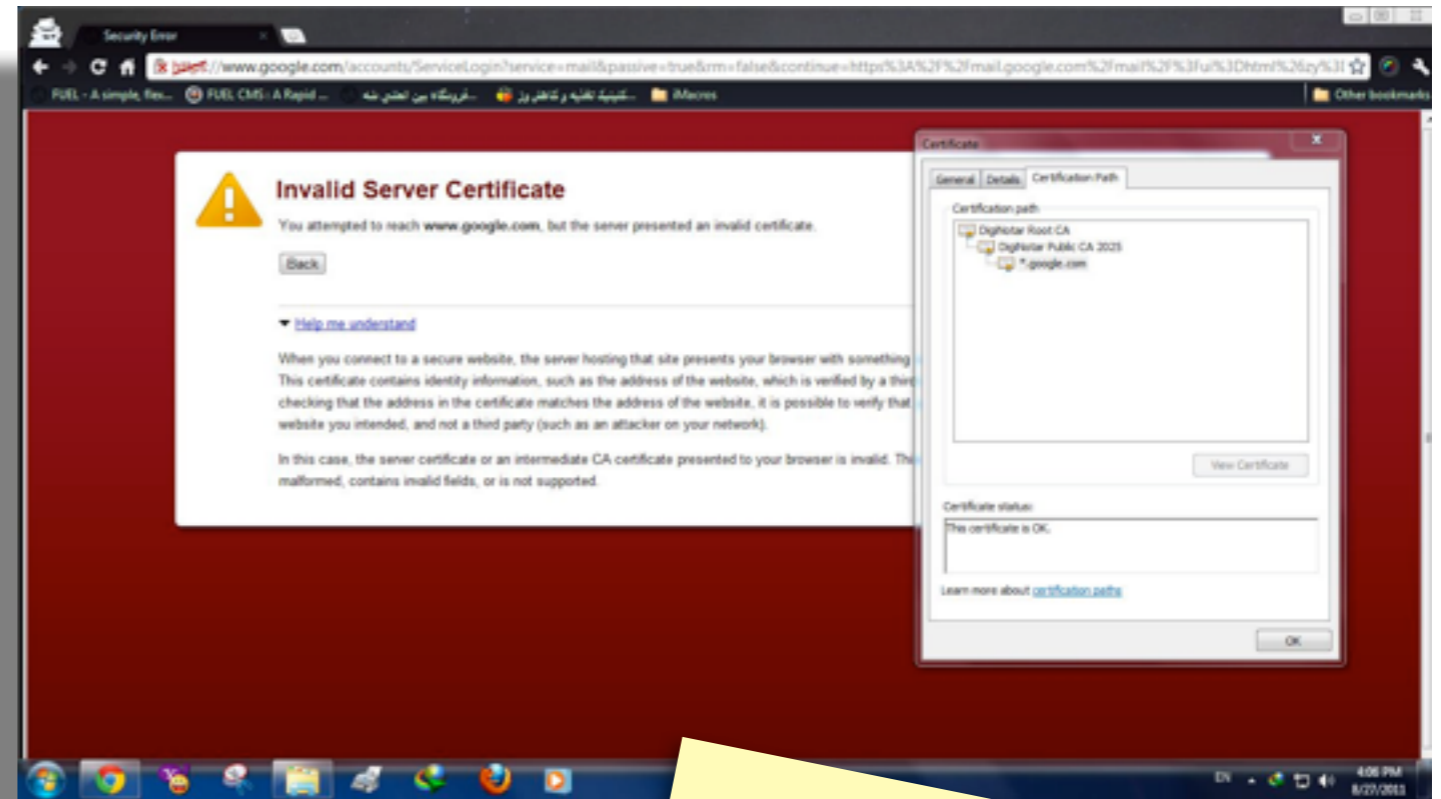
He knew about previous incidents with Certificate infrastructure and did an experiment using a VPN where he did not notice problems: His thesis was "Man in the Middle attack by Government or ISP".

<http://productforums.google.com/forum/#!category-topic/gmail/share-and-discuss-with-others/3j3r2JqFNTw>

link last verified 5 oct 2012 (avatar had changed from the snapshot above)

This is the screen shot Ali posted.

It is the Chrome browser showing that there is a signed google wildcard certificate that is validated by DIGInotar. However Chrome still flagged this as invalid.



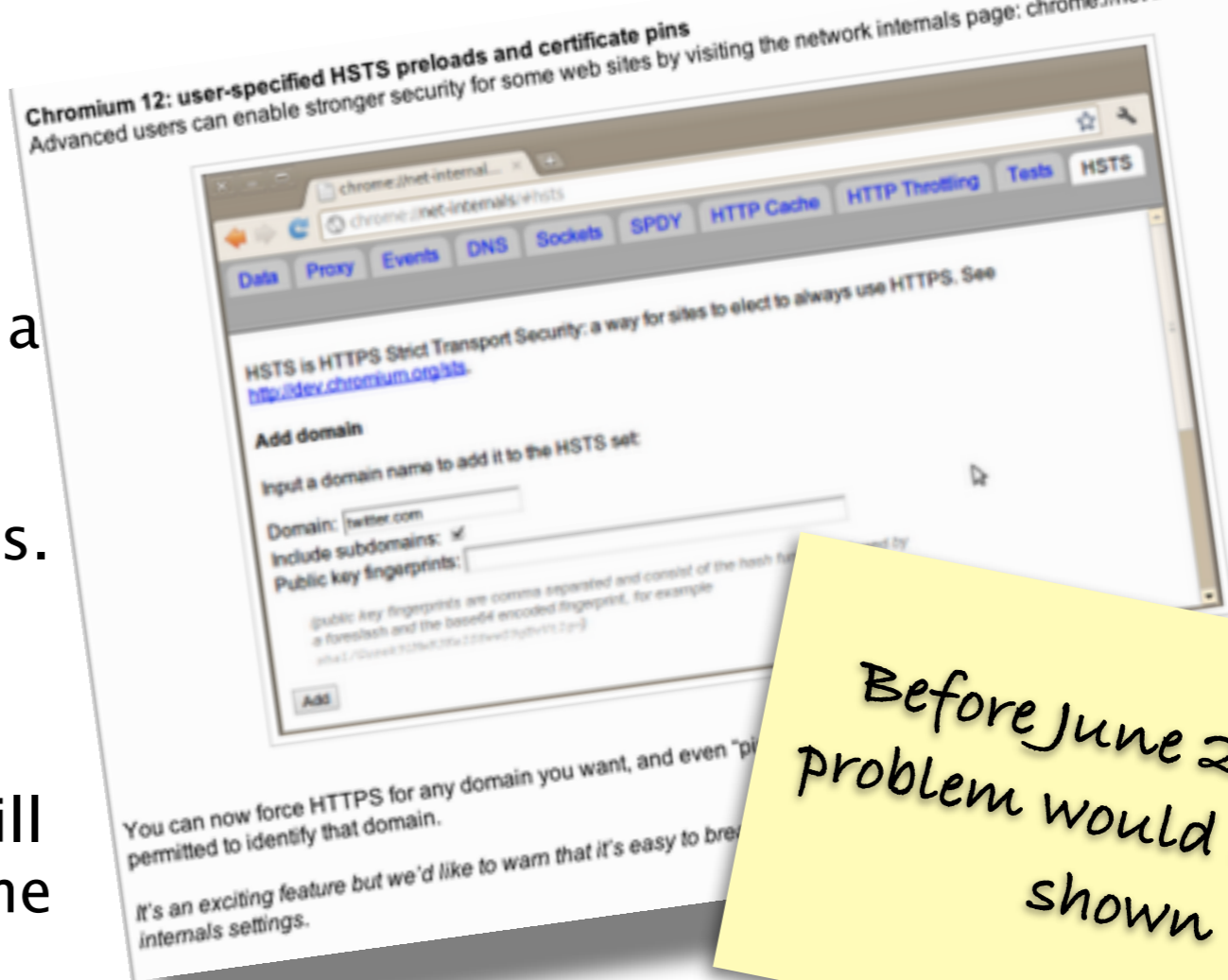
Google Chrome  
magic caught  
this!



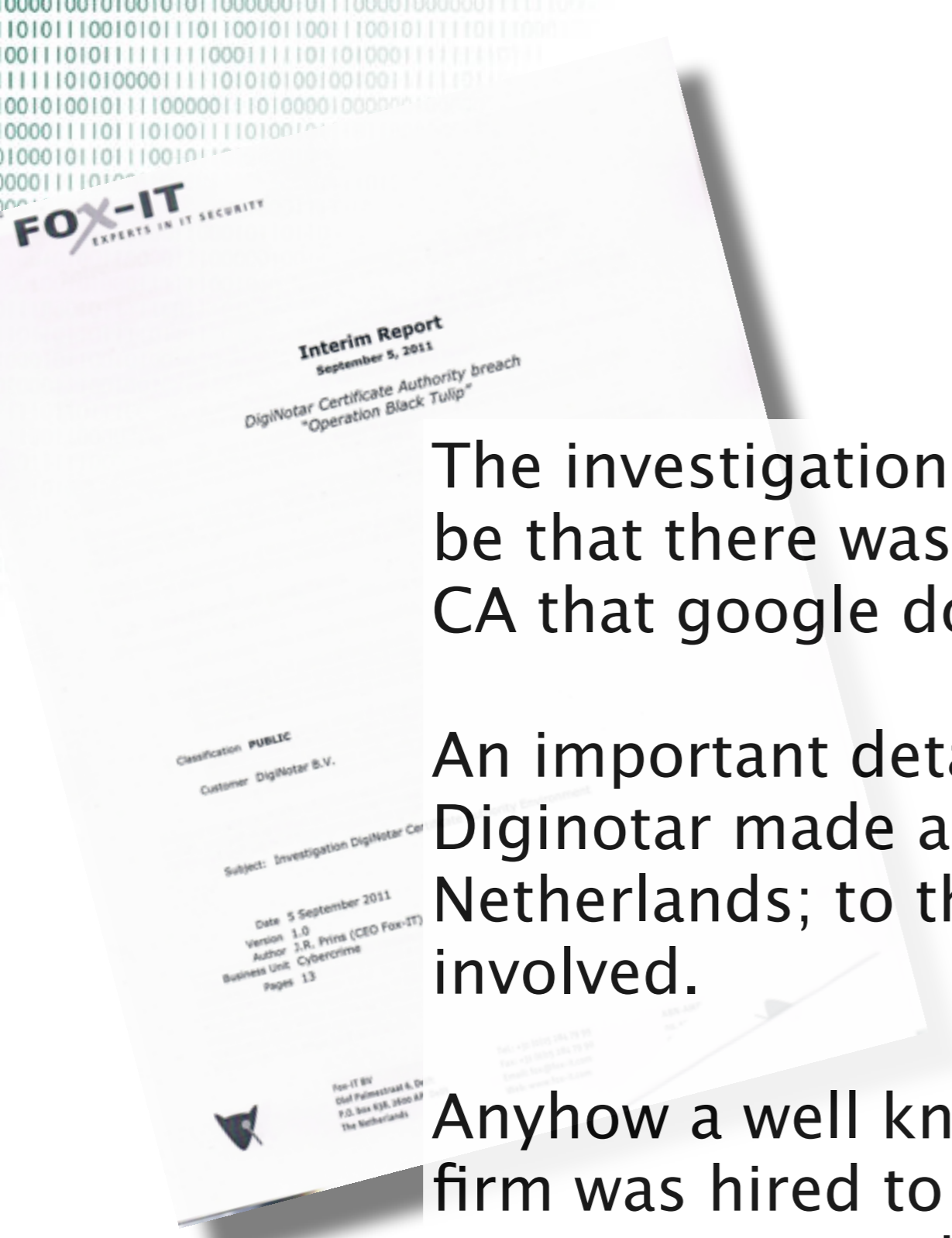
In June Chrome had introduced a technique called HTTPS Strict Transport Security (HSTS) in combination with certificate pins.

Fingerprint of certificates used for specific connections are being cached and exceptions will be flagged. The fingerprint of the google certificates come preconfigured.

<http://dev.chromium.org/sts> shows the list of preloaded keys 'today'. I am not 100% sure what was preloaded at the time.



<http://blog.chromium.org/2011/06/new-chromium-security-features-june.html>



What went wrong?

The investigation zoomed into Diginotar: How could it be that there was a signed google certificate from a CA that google doesn't o business with?

An important detail is that a perceived problem with Diginotar made all kinds of alarm bells go off in the Netherlands; to the point the responsible minister got involved.

Anyhow a well known and respected Dutch security firm was hired to investigate what went on and they wrote a report. That report is a good read.

<http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/rapporten/2011/09/05/diginotar-public-report-version-1.html>  
link verified oct 5, 2012

Compromised  
certificate issued  
by: 

Earlier report (Jul  
27): compromise of  
External web servers

Incomplete  
audit trails

Fox-IT hired to  
investigate

Multiple hacker  
tools on the  
servers

Specialized  
PKI scripts

Advanced and  
Amateur

Fingerprint  
Similarity to  
Comodo Hacker

And a claim  
by the hacker

My summary of the report: A bloody scandal. Exploits were noticed and not made public. Commercial Interests got in the way of transparency.

The details: Fox-IT traced back how hackers found their way into the Diginotar systems. They discovered dedicated and highly specialized scripts for PKI management, but also some script-kiddy material.

The Diginotar people had incomplete audit trails, knew about earlier compromise, and had remained silent about it.



Hi again! I strike back again, huh?

I told all that I can do it again, I told all in interviews that I still have accesses in Comodo resellers, I told all I have access to most of CAs, you see that words now?

You know, I have access to 4 more so HIGH profile CAs, which I can issue certs from them too which I will, I won't name them, I also had access to StartCom CA, I hacked their server too with so sophisticated methods, he was lucky by being sitted in front of HSM for signing, I will name just one more which I still have access: GlobalSign, let me use these accesses and CAs, later I'll talk about them too..

I won't talk so many detail for now, just I wanted to let the world know that ANYTHING you do will have consequences, ANYTHING your country did in past, you have to pay for it..

I was sure if I issue those certificates for myself from a company, company will be closed and will not be able to issue certs anymore, Comodo was really really lucky!

I thought if I issue certs from Dutch Gov. CA, they'll lose a lot of money:

[http://www.nasdaq.com/asp/dynamic\\_charting.aspx?selected=VDSI&timeframe=6m&charttype=line](http://www.nasdaq.com/asp/dynamic_charting.aspx?selected=VDSI&timeframe=6m&charttype=line)

But I remembered something and I hacked DigiNotar without more thinking in anniversary of that mistake:

<http://www.tepav.org.tr/en/kose-yazisi-tepav/s/2551>

When Dutch government, exchanged 8000 Muslim for 30 Dutch soldiers and Animal Serbian soldiers killed 8000 Muslims in same day, Dutch government have to pay for it, nothing is changed,

The hacker made a statement that demonstrate political motives and gave some details about the attack such as the Pr0d@dm1n as administrator password, VNC/remote desktops etc.

By the way, ask DigiNotar about this username/password combination:

Username: PRODUCTION\Administrator (domain administrator of certificate network)

Password: Pr0d@dm1n

It's not all about passwords or cracking them,

- 1) you can't have remote desktop connection in a really closed and protected network by firewalls which doesn't allow Reverse VNC, VNC, remote desktop, etc. by packet detection.
- 2) you can't even dump hashes of domain if you don't have admin privilege to crack them
- 3) you can't access 6th layer network which have no ANY connection to internet from internet

Yeah!

Bye for now



Operation Black Tulip  
2011-07-30 00:00:00

**FOX-IT**  
EXPERTS IN IT SECURITY

The movie shows the geo-location of IP addresses that called the DigiNotar revocation service to test whether \*.google.com had been revoked.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZsWoSxxwVY&hd=1>

<http://www.nlnetlabs.nl/>  
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**NLnet**  
Labs



My takeaway

This was a  
determined  
adversary

With direct access  
to Nationwide  
infrastructure

My conclusion is that the Diginotar hacker is associated with an entity that has access to Nationwide infrastructure.

One wonders: hack on request, part of the dayjob, or actioned on an underground market.

As a result

The Diginotar CA got pulled from the browser

(Inconvenient)

Iranian activists potentially saw their communication tapped

(Life Threatening?)

- Pulling the CA from the browser was a major costs throughout the Dutch governmental web infrastructure. That aspect got a lot of media attention.
- The fact that Iranian activists potentially got their communication tapped by incompetence of a Dutch company did not make the news.
- Problems caused by CA compromise may not be of only economic nature

## TAKEAWAY

Compliance  
failure

Technology  
weakness

Technology  
Defenses

- There is an inherent security weakness (I will go deeper into that weakness in the next section of the presentation) and there are compliance failures (DigiNotar not performing a competent job).
- On the other hand, Chrome's technology came to the defense.. so there is hope.



# The Browser and its Trust

Trust issues in today's browser.  
The underlying system and assumptions.

Who to trust?

Ah, oh.... those smart girls  
and boys from ... eh..



eh microfox?  
must have figured  
that out...

Trust decisions by regular end-users are not made consciously, they trust 'us' the specialists.





Let's have a look at how a Certificate Authority functions.

What we usually call a CA consist of two functions:

- a registration authority (RA) that does all the paper work and
- the certificate authority (CA) that automates signature generation.

After following a procedure the RA instructs the CA to sign a certificate.

The role of a CA

3rd party trust broker

Subject Requests

RA performs checks

RA tells CA to sign

Browser trusts CA signed certificates



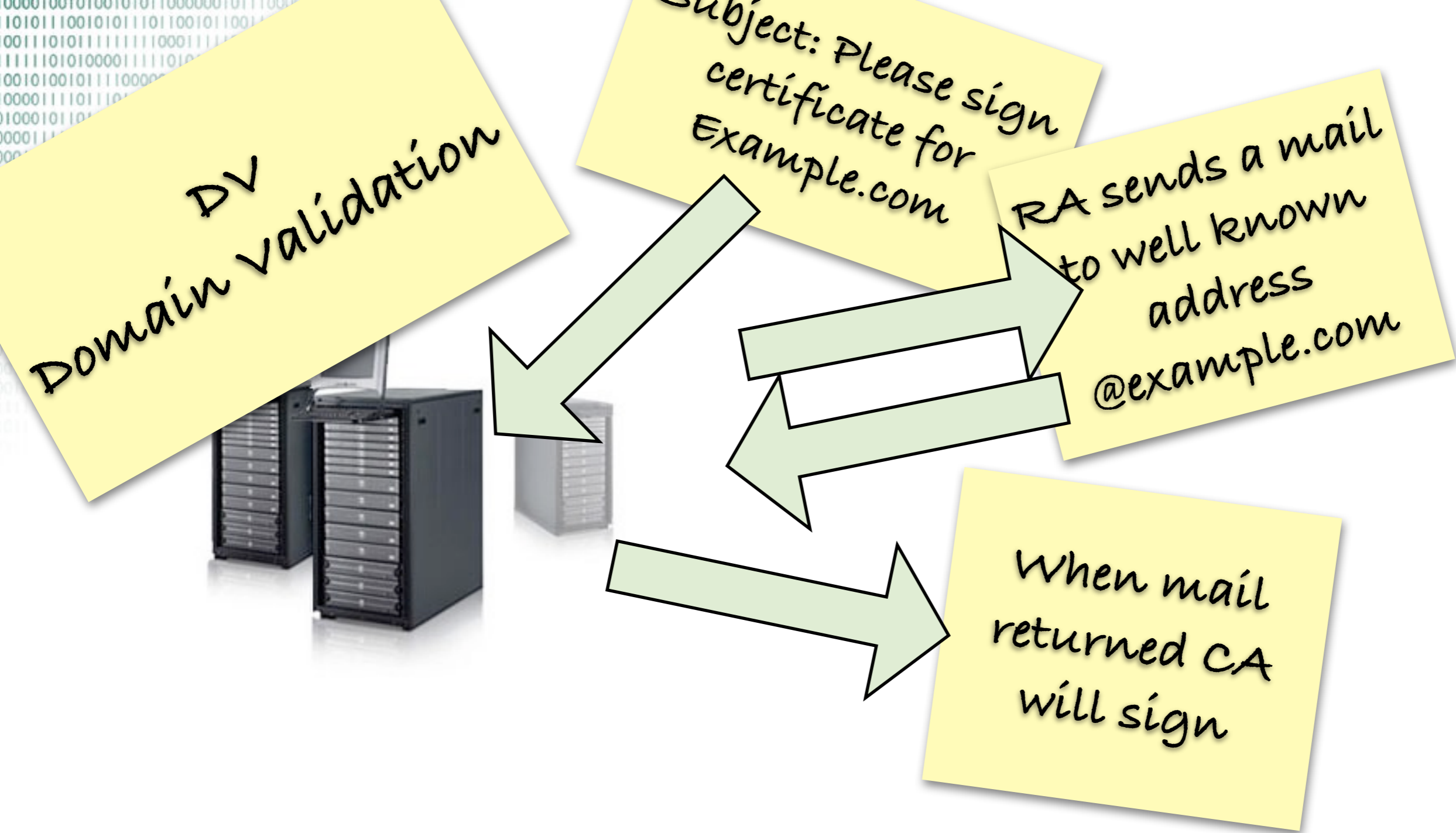
# AUTOMATE THE LOT

However all these  
little men are a wee  
bit expensive

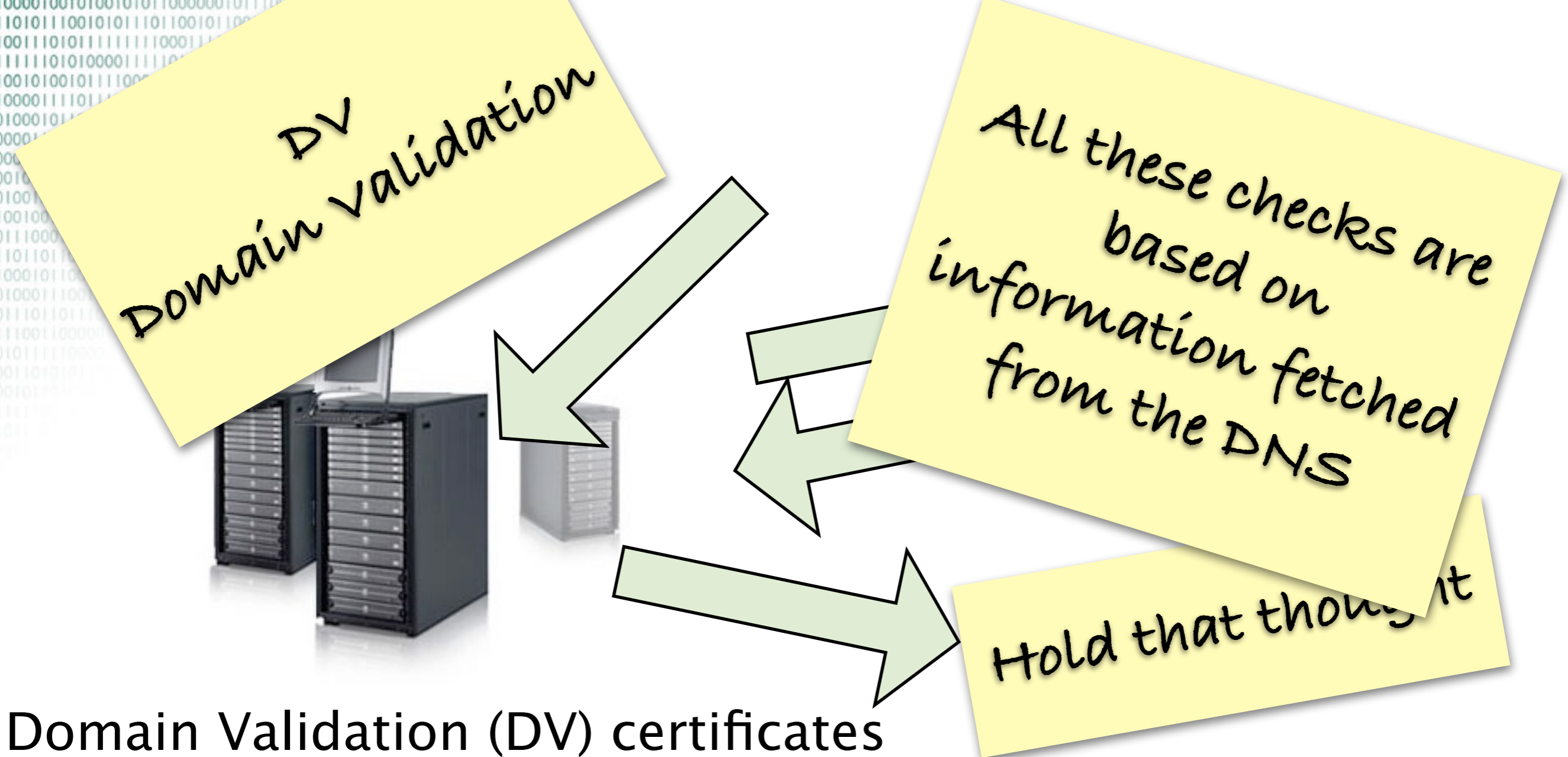


you can automate the procedures and let those machine contact the persons that claim to be holder of a specific domain using off-band mechanisms





We end up with a system that is fully automatized and does a bunch of checks based on automated e-mail exchange with well know addresses and other automatically accessible information.



## Domain Validation (DV) certificates

This how the industry evolved over the first years of PKI use:  
An economic raise to the bottom, causing DV certificates to cost cents or even been given away for free.

Note: the CA accessing all sorts of DNS information in order to validate the domain holdership by the subject.

10101110010101110110010110011000100000011101111  
001110101111111000111101101000011111110111  
11111010100001111010101001001001111101111  
0010100101110000011101000010000001000001  
000011101110100111010010110110000111  
10001011011100101101000010001100100011  
00011101001101101110001111110101  
00010101110  
0101110010  
1001010011  
0010010100  
01110001011  
1011011011  
0001011001  
100011001  
0111011011  
1100110000  
01011110000  
0011010101  
0010110000  
1111111111  
0111111111

In 2007 the CA/Browser forum came up with Guidelines For The Issuance And Management Of Extended Validation Certificates.

Domain validity



Extended validity





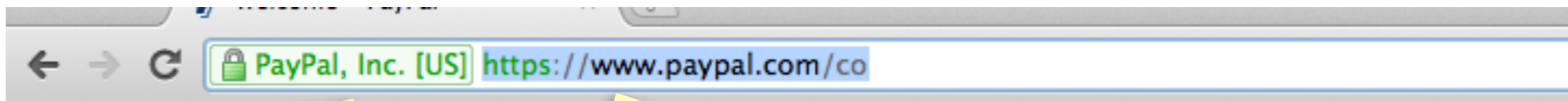
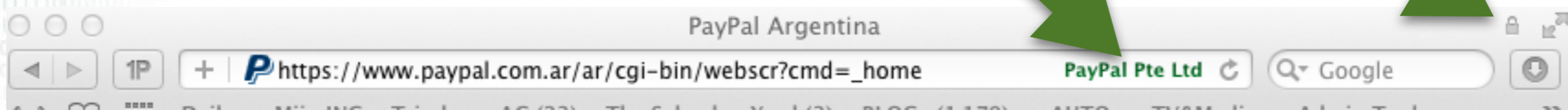
# DV/EV

Would you notice the difference?

Easy!!!

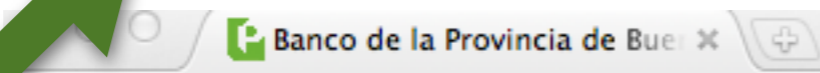
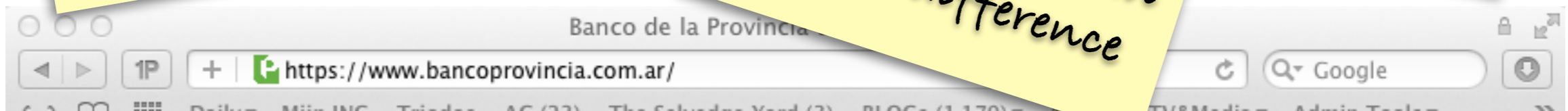
Click on the pad-lock,  
validate the CA, the  
certificate chain and the  
appropriate fields.





Fortunately

The trained eye can spot the difference





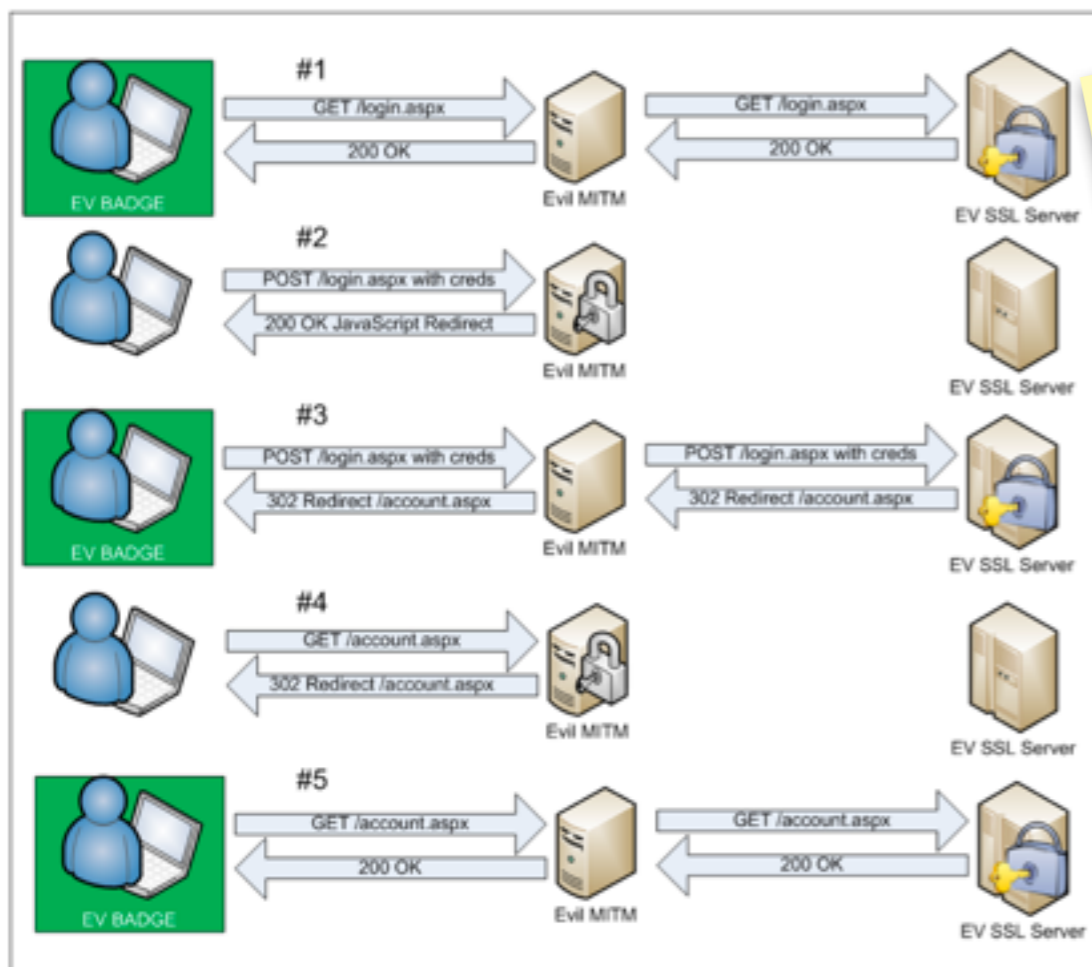


Figure: The request and response flow of an SSL Rebinding attack

Zusman & Sotirov 2009: <http://www.blackhat.com/presentations/bh-usa-09/SOTIROV/BHUSA09-Sotirov-AttackExtSSL-PAPER.pdf>

In Practice the DV-EV distinction can not be trusted

Zusman and Sotirov demonstrated rebinding attacks

UI arms-race

There have been exploits in terms of downgrading the trust relation while EV certificate badges were presented.



The underlying point is that there is an arms-race in implementation of security technology and improvement in the User Interface

651 organizations

So now and then one  
of those organizations  
will make a mistake or  
be compromised



‘When you make an omelet you’ll break eggs’  
‘When you chop there will be wood chips’

- The most recent example of operational mistakes causing wrong certificates to be leaked is TurkTrust.

Most recent case

**TURKTRUST**

- No malice but an operational mistake after an audit that caused this.

Operational mistake

- It is not to bash on this industry, but in any organization where people work there will be mistakes. And in the global infrastructure those sort of mistakes can cause damages.

No known exploits

No malice

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!msg/mozilla.dev.security.policy/aqn0Zm-KxQ0/xIhfTMGwE2AJ>



And then there  
are the  
economics



# This security world is highly competitive.

- There is a Race to the bottom: Minimal effort to live up to the compliance.
- The general mindset seems to be how can we make most money instead of how can we do the best job

# Light at the end of the tunnel?

## **No Magic Bullets and Global Perspective**



Counter Measures

Whitelisting

Blacklisting

## When making a taxonomy of solutions

- We can use blacklists: test if certificate is rogue, or
- We can use whitelists: test if certificate is in vogue.



# Counter Measures

## Blacklisting

CRL

OCSP

Doesn't scale well  
Only reliable when compromise is  
known to have happened

## The blacklist technologies

- Certificate Revocation lists
- Online certificate status protocol.

## Problems

- Scaling properties properties
- Reliance on the party that made the mistake to revoke

Economic Incentive is to not be transparent.

# Counter Measures

## Whitelisting is proactive

- Pre-populating all browsers with all public keys doesn't scale well:
- fall back to caching systems with material you already visited.

Alternatively you could use alternative infrastructure:

- Specific services that offer certificates from different vantage points in order to single out the man in the middle attacks.
- 3rd Party trust broker (e.g Trusteer)
- DNS based solutions

Whitelisting

HTSP

Leap of Faith

And/or use alternative infrastructure

Domain Name  
System

Independent Hierarchical  
Registration

One root

Scalable and  
Global

Namespace maps 1:1 to PKI  
use

The certificates used within PKIX map to the DNS namespace.

The availability of the (correct) DNS data is directly related with the availability of the service in the first place.

Therefore storing fingerprints, public keys, or certificates in the DNS is not a bad idea.

Fate sharing



# DANE

Using Secure DNS to Associate Certificates with Domain Names for TLS

<http://tools.ietf.org/wg/dane>

RFC 6698

Use the independent  
DNS infrastructure to  
vouch for the CA



# TLSA RR

## 2.3. TLSA RR Examples

An example of a hashed (SHA-256) association of a certificate:

```
_443._tcp.www.example.com. IN TLSA (  
 0 0 1 d2abde240d7cd3ee6b4b28c54df034b9  
      7983ald16e8a410e4561cb106618e971 )
```

An example of a hashed (SHA-512) subject public key association of a PKIX end entity certificate:

```
_443._tcp.www.example.com. IN TLSA  
 1 1 2 92003ba34942dc74152e2f2c408d29ec  
      a5a520e7f2e06bb944f4dca346baf63c  
      1b177615d466f6c4b71c216a50292bd5  
      8c9ebdd2f74e38fe51ffd48c43326cbc )
```

An example of a full certificate association of a PKIX trust anchor:

```
_443._tcp.www.example.com. IN TLSA  
 2 0 0 30820307308201efa003020102020... )
```

- Store a public key of the CA that is supposed to sign a entity's certificate in the DNS
- Store a public key of the entities certificate in the DNS
- Store the certificate of the CA in the DNS
- Store the certificate of the entity in the DNS



DANE can also be used by the CA's to test if certificates offered to them are not intended to be signed by others.

Prevents DigiNotar CA vouching for google because google can signal they use Thawte

valid CERTS and/or CAs are stored in the the DNS: allow only those for your connection

assumption of compliance: CA will look up DANE RR before signing certificates



# BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

DANE offers the protection that you are looking at a valid EV certificate

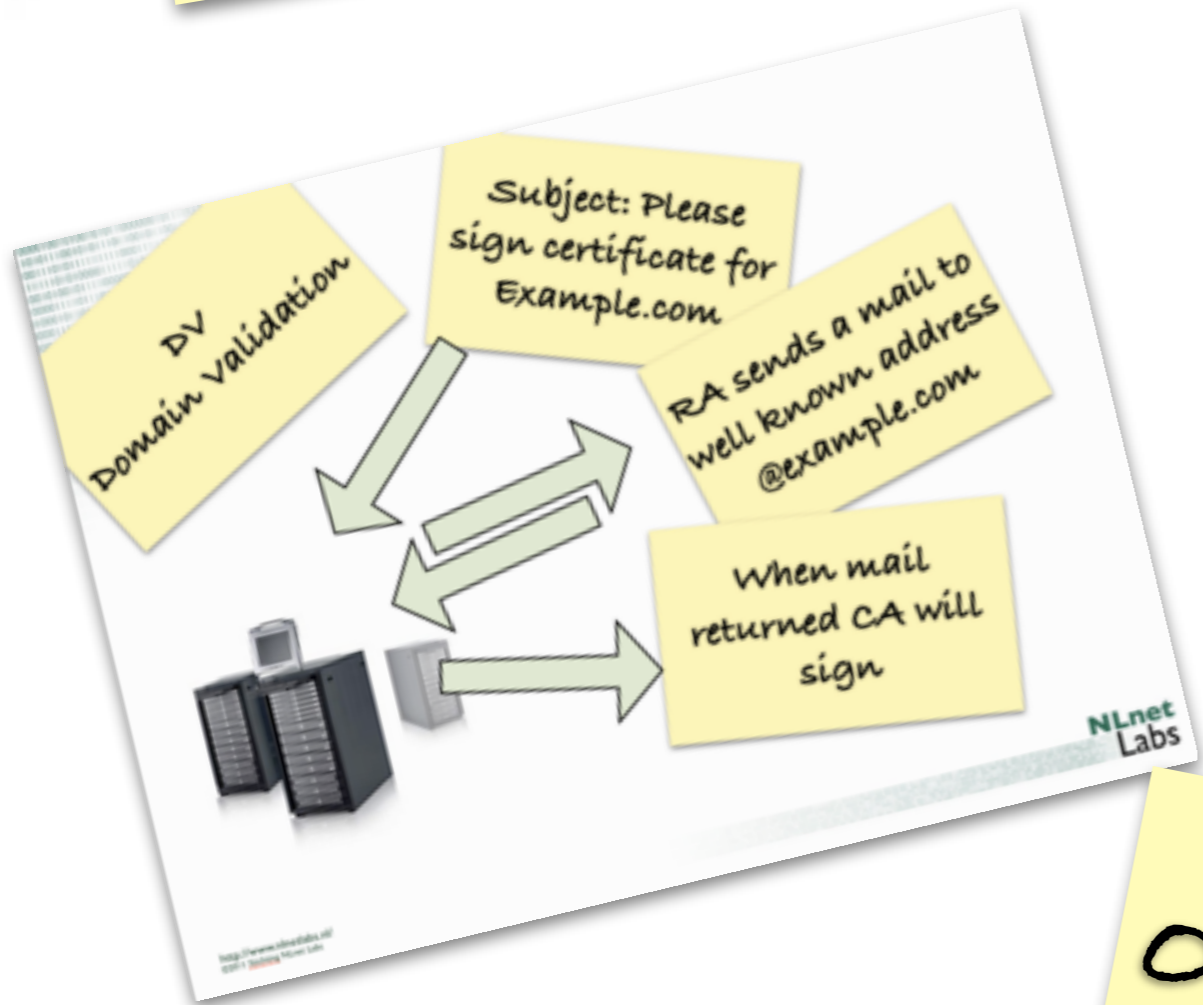
The EV certificate offers you the legal paper trail that you are doing business with a real company

How about DV certificates,  
are they useless?

CAs checking the  
DNS are not  
needed

The CERT can be  
stored in the DNS at  
once

One of DANE's use cases





How does  
DNSSEC get  
into the picture



DANE depends on the  
authenticity and integrity

- DANE critically depends on the authenticity and integrity of the DNS information.
- DNSSEC offers those properties
- (For the ‘protocol side’ of the DNS, the provisioning side is another aspect).

Even if we do not have DANE it is useful  
to deploy DNSSEC

**PREVENTS A CLASS OF  
MAN IN THE MIDDLE  
ATTACKS THAT MAKE  
CERTIFICATE EXPLOITS  
POSSIBLE**

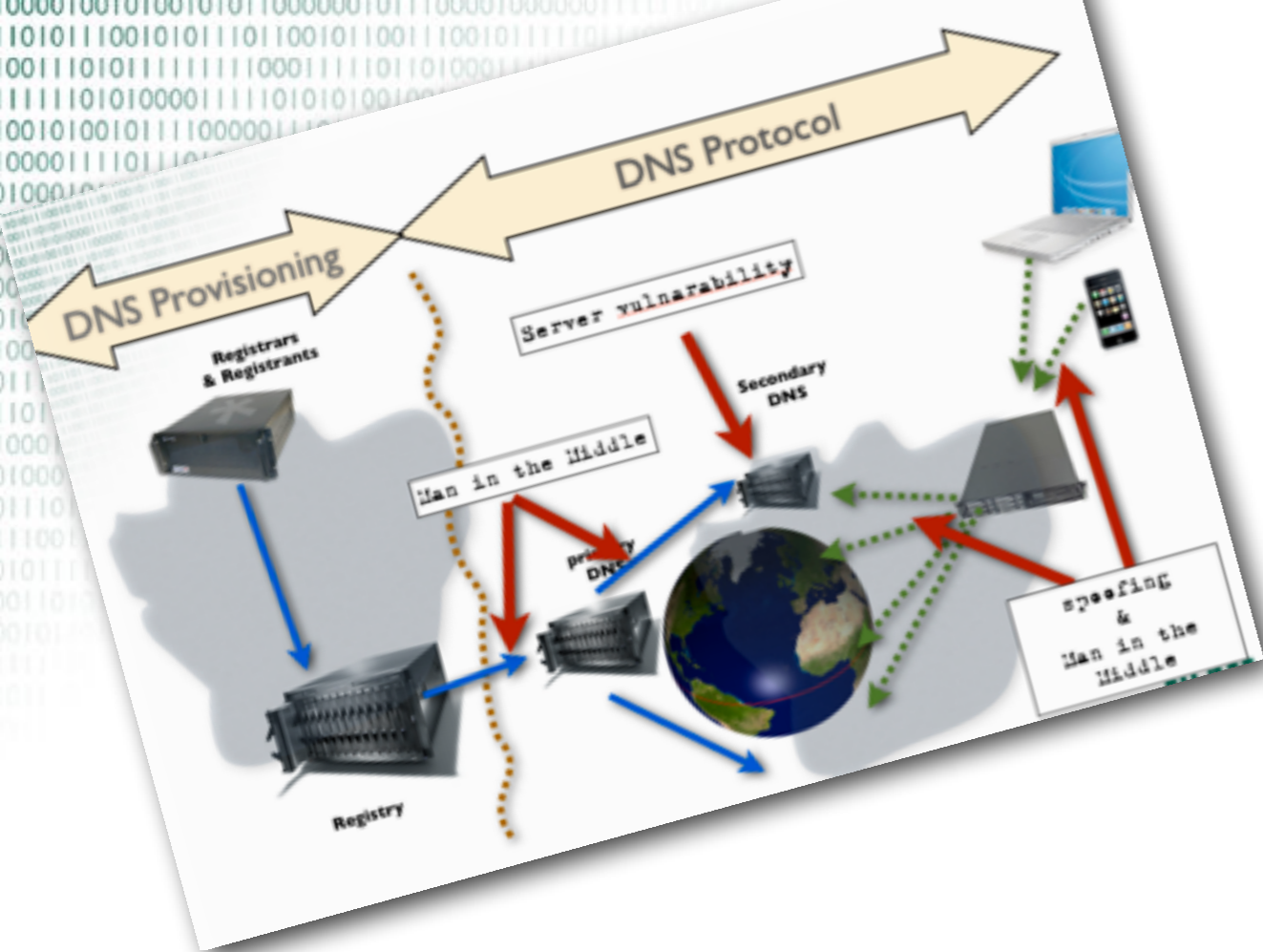
*And it offers a building  
for further security  
innovation*



# Hold it

*You only talked DNSSEC technology*

- We talked about DNSSEC as a solution to Certificate Authority compromises.
- But DNSSEC applies to technology to transport DNS data. The problems with PKI are in the policies and procedures, and have to do with user interface issues.
- Aren't there similar issues in DNS?



Yes:

- The DNSSEC only applies to the protocol
- The assumption is that registration at the left hand side is done correctly

Note though that w.r.t. provisioning DNS has similar weaknesses. Registries and Registrars sometimes make mistakes

Google.ie Hijacked?

technology.ie/google-ie-hijacked/

Google.ie Hijacked?

NEWS / VIEWS / REVIEWS

# TECHNOLOGY

WEEKLY PODCAST AND UPDATES FROM THE TECH SCENE

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## Google.ie Hijacked?

by Michele on October 9, 2012 in security

Tweet Like +1 Share

It looks like Google.ie has been hijacked

The current whois record shows:

“ *whois google.ie*

*% Rights restricted by copyright;  
http://iedr.ie/index.php/mnudomregs/mnudnssearch/96  
% Do not remove this notice*

domain: google.ie  
descr: Google, Inc  
descr: Body Corporate (Ltd,PLC,Company)  
descr: Registered Trade Mark Name  
admin-c: KR59-IEDR



Image via CrunchBase

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- Croatian Startup To Power US Presidential Debate Twitter Interaction OCTOBER 3, 2012



- In the DNS registration space similar problems to PKI
- For DV reduction in attack surface:
  - Instead of offering two potential points of compromise in the registration chain you only offer one.
- But for Extended Validity certificates compromising the DNS doesn't trivially result in the possibility to obtain a EV certificate.
- Fate sharing in the DNS: If the DNS is compromised it is trivial to not offer an HTTPS service and use a fallback attack towards a service.
- Trust in correct functioning of the DNS is already critically important.



DANE has the potential to solve important aspects PKI/TLS problems

Not a magic bullet

Not the only approach

'convergence'

DNSSEC is needed infrastructure: securing and enabling at the same time

Not a magic bullet either



The Internet PKI has a trust issue.

A global trust issue

Scalability problems:  
compliance and  
technology

Internet Trust is Global  
Trust

Local action global  
effect

misaligned  
incentives

## Global Trust:

- I trust different institutions than you.
- Local action can have global effects.
  - But Local Choice remains a fundamental principle (User choice in trust-anchors etc).
- Be aware of misaligned incentives during deployment: they increase the hurdles of getting solutions out there (e.g. DNSSEC).

How to increase  
global trust in  
the Internet?

Without a race to  
the bottom of  
minimal  
compliance?

With meaningful  
incremental steps  
in improving  
technology?

- Technology is only part of the answer
- Open Solutions, please!
- Small meaningful steps may be more effective in approaching a solution than when we try to work for paradigm shift



1010111001010111011001011001110010111101100111  
0011101011111110001111011010001111110111  
11111010100011110101010010010011111011011  
001010010111000011101000010000001000001  
00001110111010011101001011101100001111  
1000101101110010110100001000110010001  
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100011100100100101  
1110110111001100  
1100110000111001  
0101111000011  
00110101110011001  
0010110011001  
1111001  
011

*That's it folk*

**Questions, comments,  
ideas:  
[olaf@nlnetlabs.nl](mailto:olaf@nlnetlabs.nl)**

