TapeTrack Server: Anti-Throttle and Anti-Hacking Measures

Protocol Overview

TapeTrack uses a compressed and encrypted binary protocol to communicate between clients and servers.

When a TapeTrack Server is exposed to the internet, it is common for unauthorized connection attempts to occur. These are typically automated scans from hackers who are unaware they're targeting a TapeTrack service. For example, a server running on port 5000 may be mistaken for:

- A UPnP service
- An SSL server on a non-standard port

Although unauthorized access is extremely difficult due to TapeTrack's protocol and encryption, repeated connection attempts can consume server resources.

Connection Handling Strategy

TapeTrack implements a lightweight defense mechanism to reduce impact from non-compliant clients:

- **Connection Acceptance**: If not blocked by a firewall, TapeTrack accepts incoming connections.
- **Time-Out Table Check**: If the source IP is in the time-out table and the time-out period is still active, the connection is immediately dropped.
- **Protocol Validation**: If the connection is accepted but the client sends a packet that does not match the TapeTrack protocol, the IP is added to the time-out table and dropped.

Once an IP address (or gateway) sends a non-TapeTrack packet, all future connections from that IP during the time-out period will be accepted but terminated immediately.

Advanced Linux Integration: eBPF Support

On Linux systems, TapeTrack can integrate with eBPF for kernel-level IP blocking.

To enable this:

- Start the server with the `-B` argument and a pointer to a preloaded eBPF table.
- TapeTrack will dynamically add/remove IPs from the table during the time-out period.
- If enabled, connections from banned IPs will be blocked at the kernel level, preventing any interaction with the TapeTrack Server.

Further Reading

For setup instructions and eBPF integration steps, refer to the eBPF Configuration Technote.

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