



# LTE Pwnage: Hacking HLR/HSS and MME Core Network Elements

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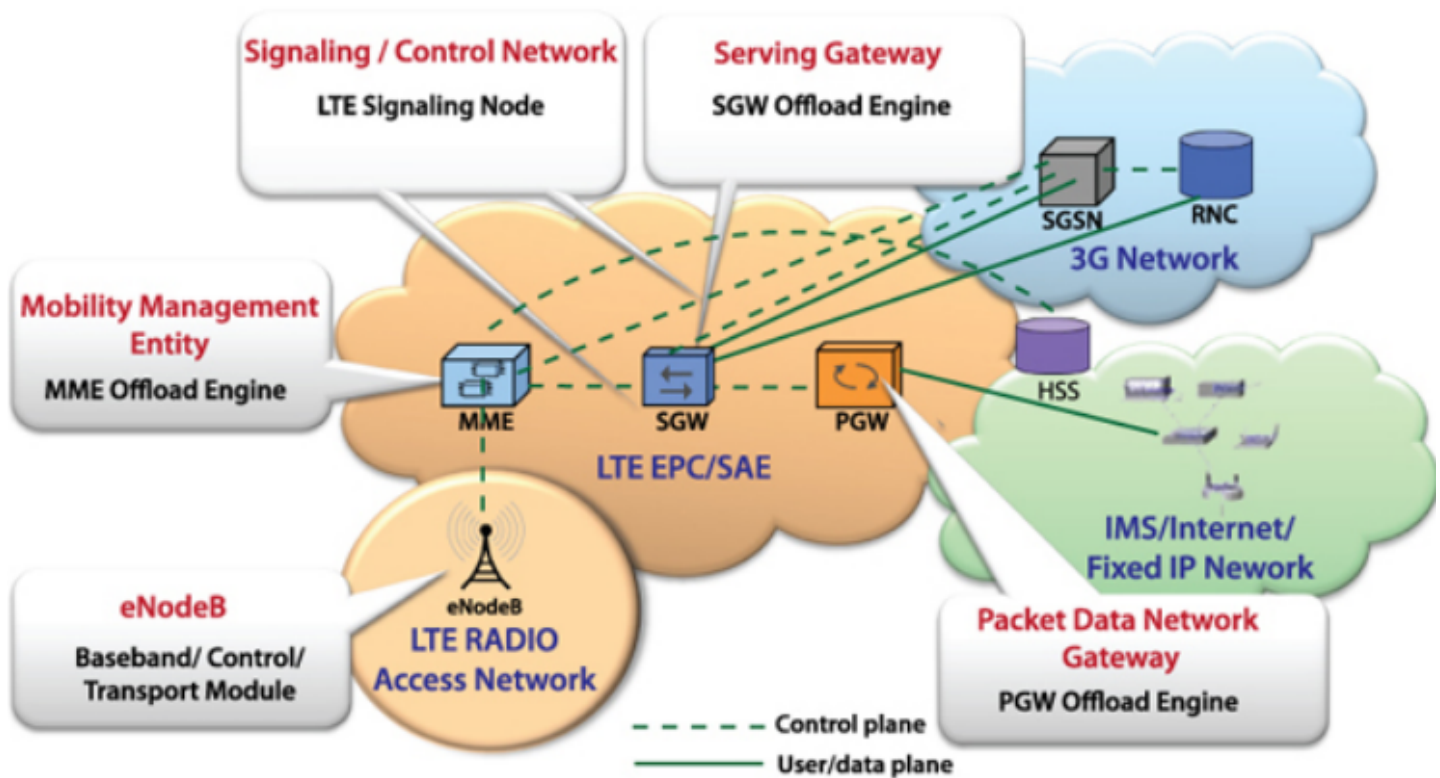
## Executive summary

Welcome to the LTE Pwnage PDF file! This document is a comprehensive guide to the risks and vulnerabilities of LTE (Long-Term Evolution) networks, which are widely used for mobile communication and data transfer. As the use of LTE networks continues to grow, so does the risk of cyber attacks that can compromise sensitive corporate and personal data. This document aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the various attack methods used by hackers to exploit LTE networks and offers practical solutions to mitigate these risks.

The document is divided into several sections, starting with an overview of the LTE environment and the increased risk of corporate and mobile data breaches. It then delves into the LTE network attack surface, exploring the different types of attacks that can be launched against LTE networks, including spear-phishing, botnets and malware, flooding, and Trojan and backdoors. The document also examines the impact of IPv6 on the security of LTE networks and the intricate and new protocols used in LTE networks, such as Diameter, S1, X2, and GTP. Finally, the document offers practical solutions to mitigate the risks of LTE network attacks, including network segmentation, intrusion detection and prevention systems, and security monitoring.

## 1. LTE Environment

### LTE Overview



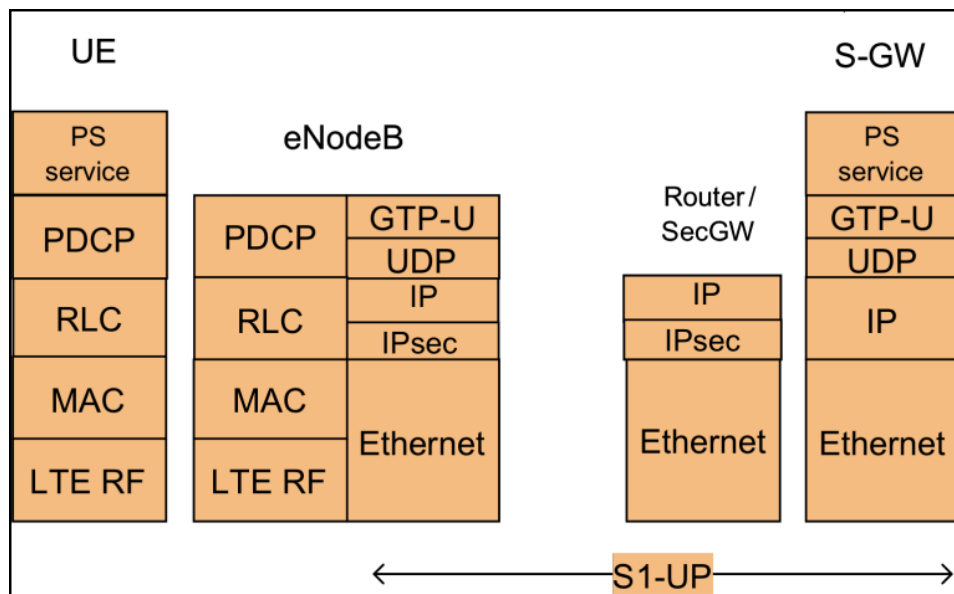
### 1.1 Corporate and Mobile Data risk has increased

- LTE from attackers' perspective
- All IP are always on, thus always vulnerable?
  - Spear-phishing
  - Botnets & Malware
  - Flooding
  - Trojan & Backdoors
- IPv6 renders NAT protection inefficient
- Split Handshake TCP attacks prevents IPS and Antivirus
- Very similar architecture for attackers: ATCA, Linux
- Intricate and new protocols: Diameter, S1, X2, GTP

## 2G, 3G and LTE: Reality and Legacy

2G	3G	LTE
BTS	Node B	eNode B
BSC	merged into Node B	merged into eNode B
MSC / VLR	RNC	MME, MSC Proxy
HLR	HLR, IMS HSS, HE	LTE SAE HSS, SDR/SDM
STP	STP, SG	Legacy STP
GGSN	GGSN	PDN GW
SGSN	SGSN	MME/SGW
IN	IN/PCRF	PCRF
RAN Firewall	RAN Firewall	SeGW

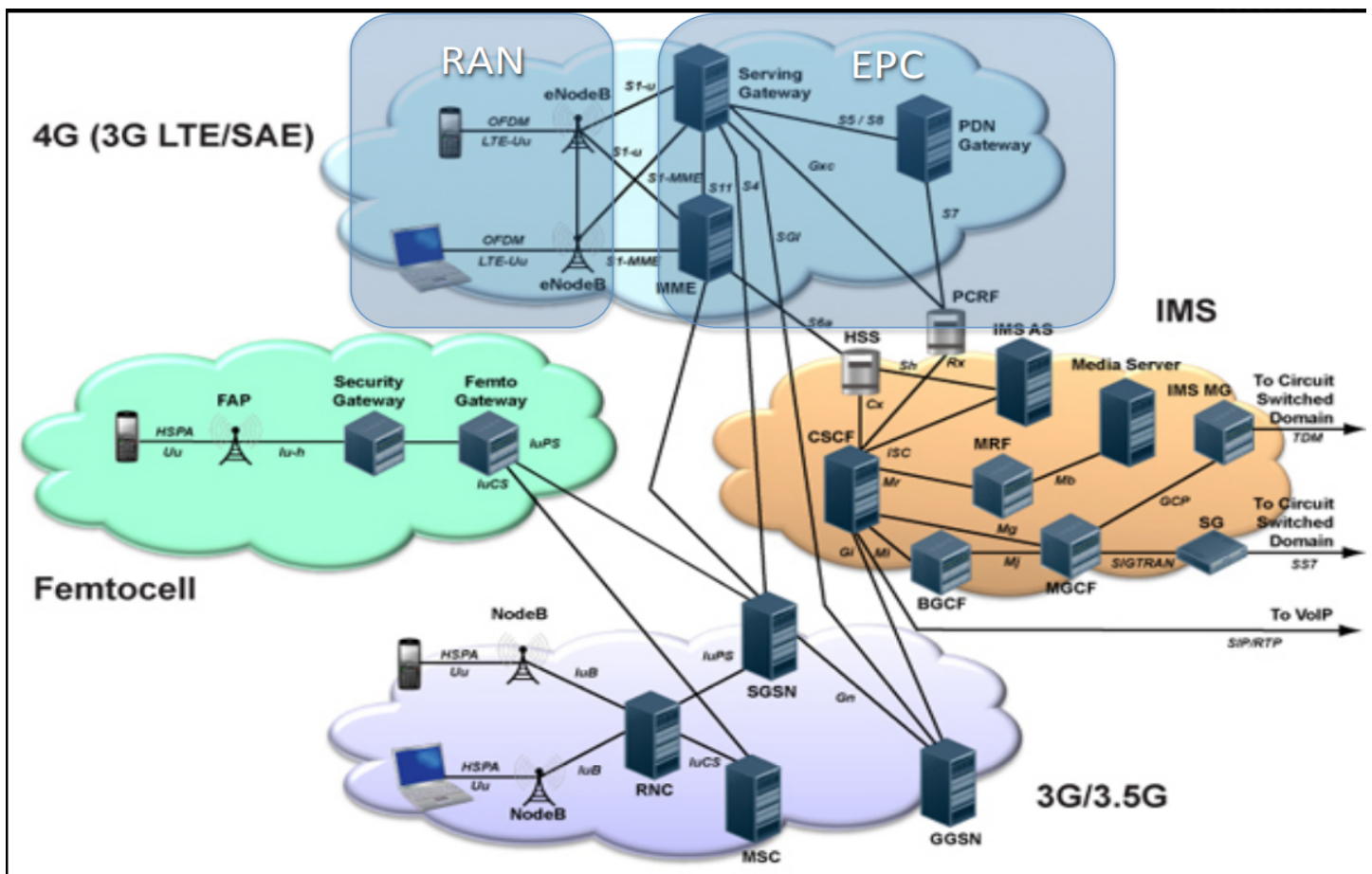
## User data content: LTE User Plane



## 2. LTE Network Attack Surface

- Full IP only
  - No: full IP double exposure
- Packets (PS Domain)
  - 2x attack surface
    - GTP still present
    - S1AP/X2AP new
- Circuits (CS Domain)
  - 2x attack surface
    - SIGTRAN & SS7 will stay for many years
    - IMS & Diameter

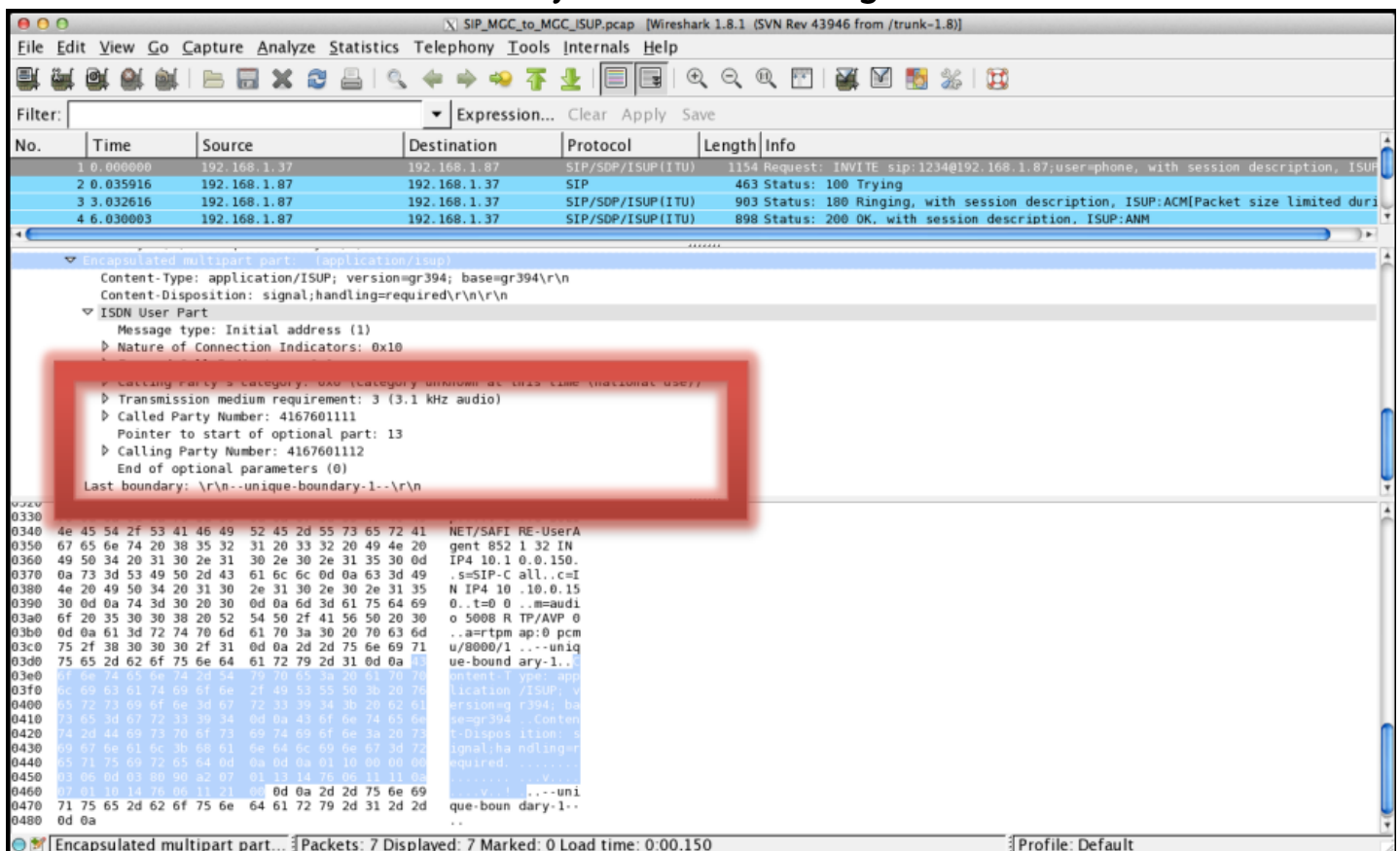
### 3G and LTE together



## 2.1 CSFB vs. VOLTE vulnerability attack surface

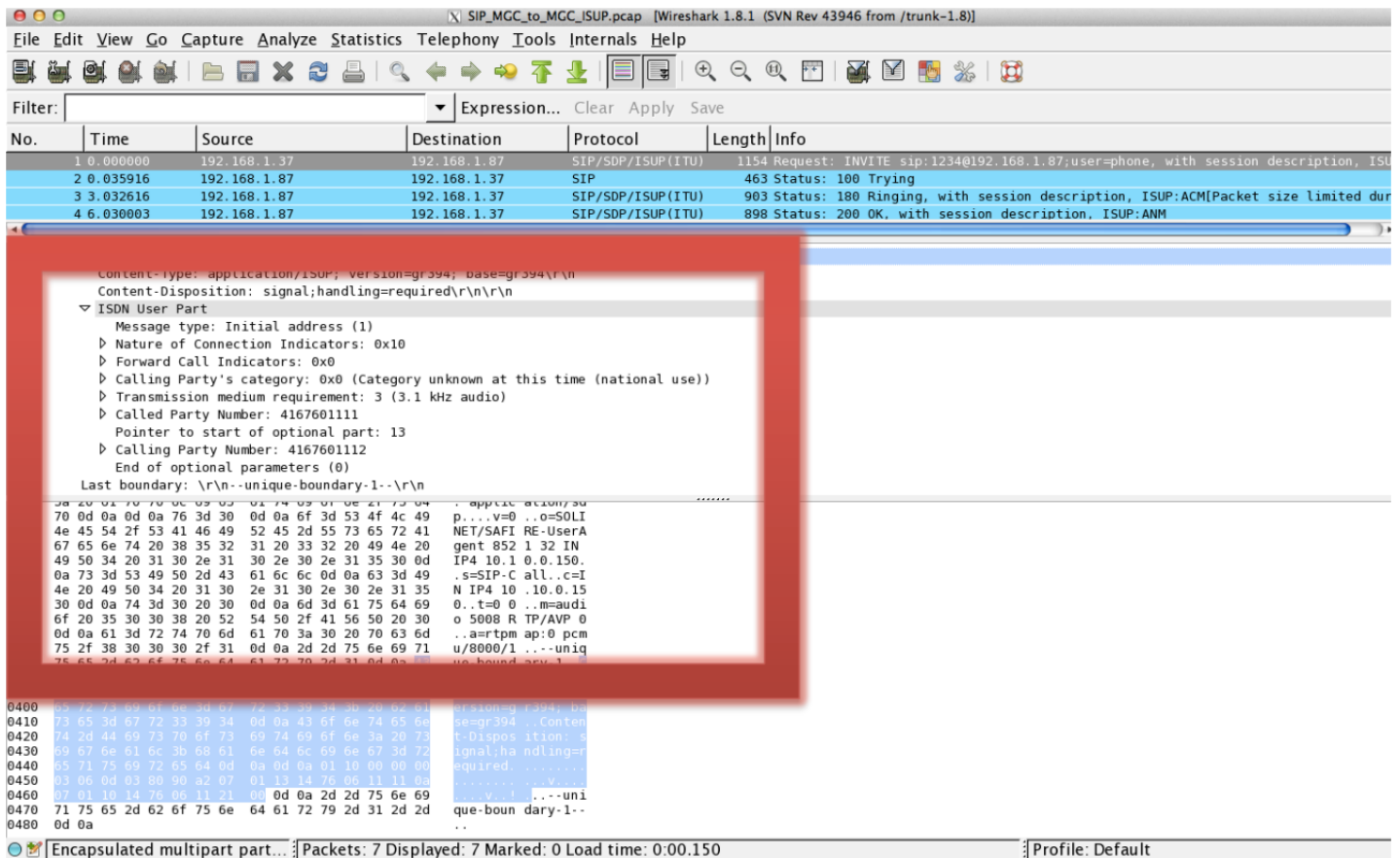
- CSFB
  - CS Fall Back from 4G to 3G
  - Past is present
  - SS7 and SIGTRAN stack vulnerabilities (DoS, spoof,...)
- VOLTE
  - Whole new attack surface
  - New APN, new network to hack, new servers
  - Closer to the Core Network == more serious vulnerabilities
  - IMS (CSCF = SIP servers, DNS,...)
    - Standard? No...

### ISUP injection in SIP through VOLTE



Even though SIP is known...Internet SIP + SS7 ISUP == SIP-I and SIP-T == ISUP Injection !

- Remote Core Network DoS
- SS7 compromise
- External signalling injection
- Spoofing of ISUP messages
- Fake billing



## 2.2 CSFB Attack surface through MSC Proxy and SS7 + SIGTRAN

- All SIGTRAN attack surface exposed
- All SS7 attack surface exposed
- Most dangerous:
  - Logical Denial of Service attacks
    - SSP-based SCCP DoS (P1 CVID#480)
    - TFP-based SS7 DoS (P1 CVID#481)
  - Equipment Crash/Denial of Service attacks
    - Ericsson MSC Crash DoS (P1 VID#330)
    - NSN HLR Crash DoS (P1 VID#148)
    - Ericsson STP Crash DoS (P1 VID#187)



### 3. NSN NGHLR remote Denial of Service caused by fragile SS7 stack

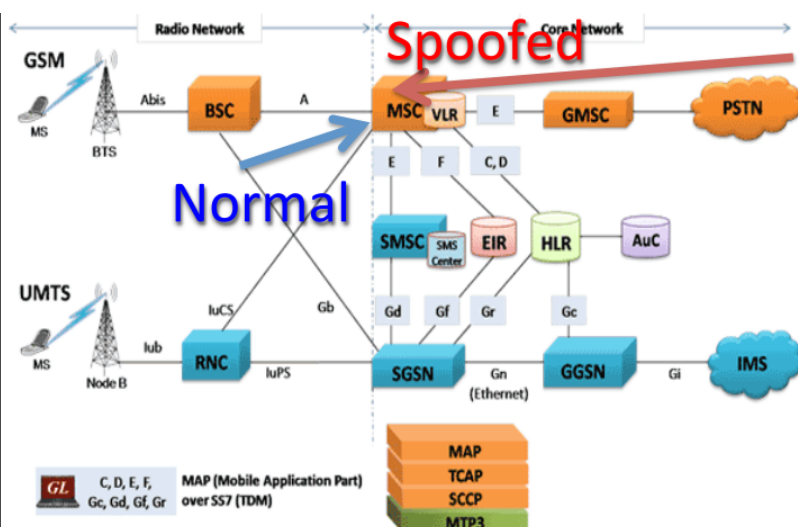
Severity	Critical
Description	NGHLR SS7 stack software is not robust and suffers from Remote Denial of Service.
Impact	Enables any person sending malicious SCCP traffic to the HLR to crash it. This includes the whole international SS7 network as HLRs need always to be globally reachable.

Reliability for telecom

- Ability to cope with X million of requests
- Inability to cope with malformed traffic

#### 3.1 GSM MAP primitive MAP\_FORWARD\_ACCESS\_SIGNALLING enables RAN signalling injection

Severity	Medium
Description	This GSM MAP MSU "MAP_FORWARD_ACCESS_SIGNALLING" forwards any content to the Radio Access Network (RAN).
Impact	The result is that some external entities may send or spoof MAP_FORWARD_ACCESS_SIGNALLING MSUs to target MSC GTs and have the vulnerable MSCs to inject this signalling into the radio network (typically RANAP).



- Spoof and inject radio signalling
- As if it was coming from Radio Network



## 3.1.1 Fun Anti-forensics

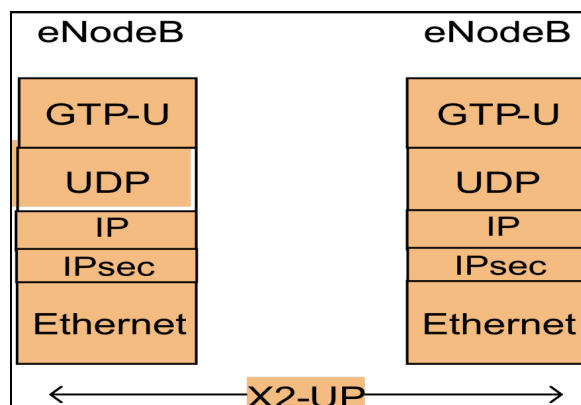
- Same attack as VID#187
- Also crash Ericsson traffic monitoring log analysis forensic tools (P1 VKD VID#213)
- Code sharing between enforcement and forensic tools

```
C:\>alogfind -a 0002 -b 0400 -e 20121020 -g 20121022 -t alp
PrcUnhandledExceptionFilter : UNHANDLED EXCEPTION!!! (In alogfind)
```

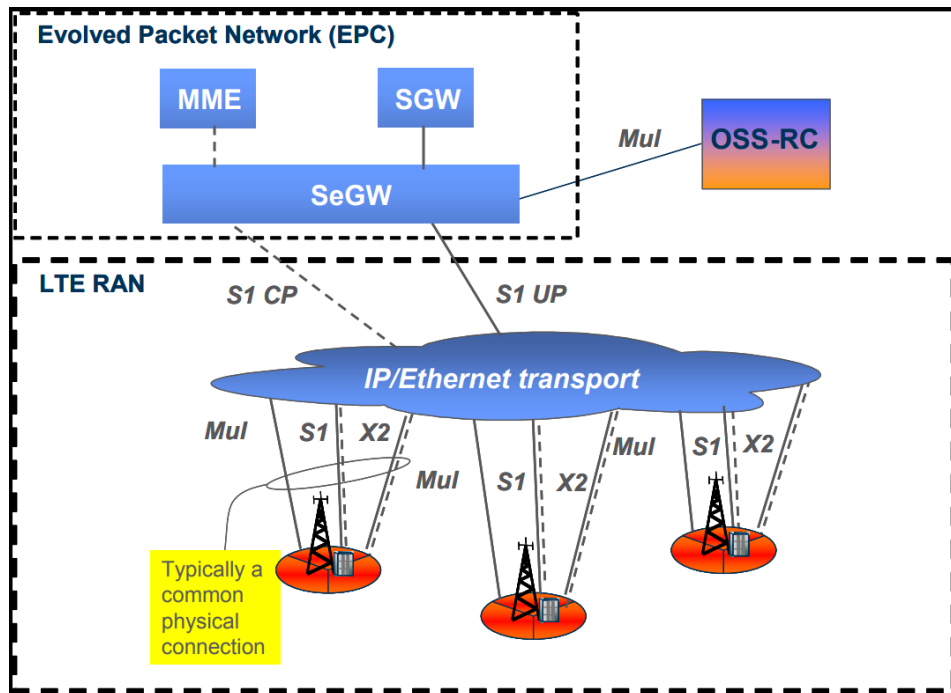
## 3.2 Peer to Peer Radio Access Network

- X2AP
  - eNodeB's
  - Peer to Peer
- Translation
  - Every base station can talk to every other
  - Network attack surface increase
  - Total spread into the RAN network
- Operator-wide L2 network
  - L2 attacks, less defence in depth, scanning only blocked by size of network
  - Did GTP disappear? No

### User data between eNBs: LTE User Plane



## LTE RAN Overview

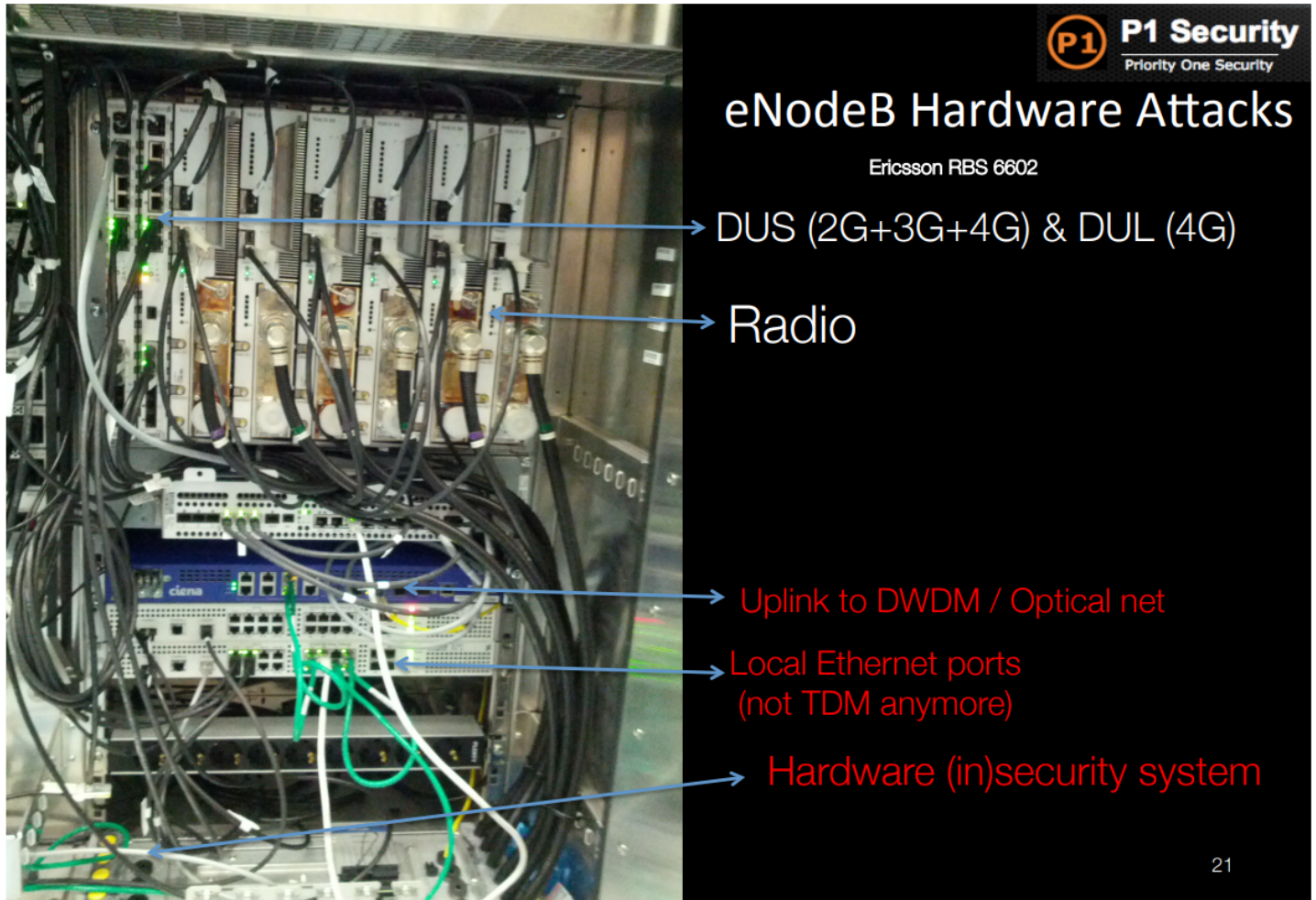


## 4. Pwning OSS

### L2 network mistakes always happen

- Can't catch it with multiple overlapping /8 networks: automate!
- From any eNodeB to the NMS
- From any eNodeB to any eNodeB
  - You can bet on insecure provisioning
- American example & Remote misconfiguration

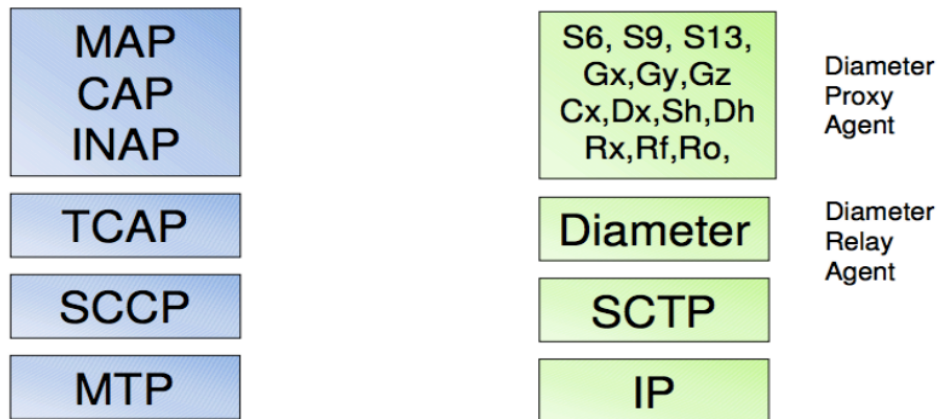
```
# telnet 172.1.2.3 22
Trying 172.1.2.3...
Connected to 172.1.2.3.
Escape character is '^['.
SSH-2.0-OpenSSH based Ericsson SSH Server for OSE, CNX9010123_CPP7
Protocol mismatch.
Connection closed by foreign host.
#
```



## 4.1 LTE: Equipment Attack surface increase

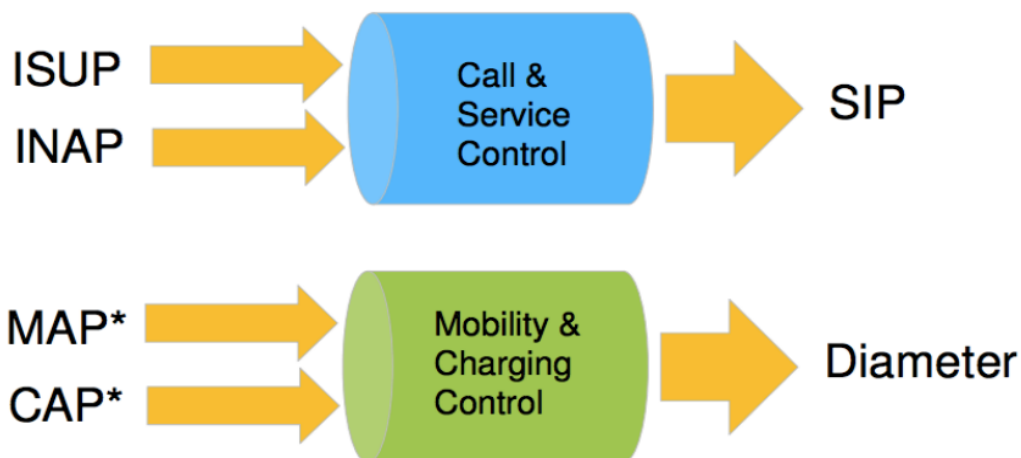
- Diameter (New)
  - Added surface
  - New code, maturity in question
  - Very few commercial fuzzers support it
  - Even less really trigger bugs in Diameter (depth pbm)
- S1/X2AP (New)
  - GTP + MAP within two completely new protocols
  - With encapsulation of user traffic (Non Access Stratum protocol)
- What could possibly go wrong?

## Comparing the SS7 and Diameter Protocol Stacks



- › Diameter is the successor of Radius, originally used for AAA
- › Diameter acts as an “envelope” for applications (= interfaces)

## Mapping of SS7 to IP protocols



- › CAP\* - 2G/3G CAMEL prepaid functions in future via Diameter, VAS functions of CAMEL via SIP (= INAP)
- › MAP\* - AAA and mobility in future via Diameter, Messaging (SMS) via SIP



## 4.2 Diameter audit/fuzzing problem

No.	Time	cgGT	cgSSN	cdGT	cdSSN	Protocol	Length	Info
82	212.059173					DIAMETER	262	cmd=Capabilities-ExchangeRequest(257) flags=R--- appl=Diameter Common
84	212.078804					DIAMETER	294	cmd=Capabilities-ExchangeAnswer(257) flags=---- appl=Diameter Common M
85	212.080569					DIAMETER	146	cmd=Device-WatchdogRequest(280) flags=R--- appl=Diameter Common Messag
87	212.084998					DIAMETER	178	SACK cmd=Device-WatchdogAnswer(280) flags=---- appl=Diameter Common Me

Diameter Protocol	
Version:	0x01
Length:	200
Flags:	0x80
Command Code:	257 Capabilities-Exchange
ApplicationId:	0
Hop-by-Hop Identifier:	0x00204a16
End-to-End Identifier:	0x67700000
<a href="#">[Answer In: 84]</a>	
AVP: Origin-Host(264) l=31 f=-M- val=backend.eap.testbed.aaa	
AVP: Origin-Realm(296) l=23 f=-M- val=eap.testbed.aaa	
AVP: Origin-State-Id(278) l=12 f=-M- val=1273828983	
AVP: Host-IP-Address(257) l=14 f=-M- val=192.168.105.20 (192.168.105.20)	
AVP: Host-IP-Address(257) l=26 f=-M- val=fde4:2c6e:55c4:105:a00:27ff:fe0b:7859 (fde4:2c6e:55c4:105:a00:27ff:fe0b:7859)	
AVP: Vendor-Id(266) l=12 f=-M- val=0	
AVP: Product-Name(269) l=20 f=-M- val=freeDiameter	
AVP: Firmware-Revision(267) l=12 f=-M- val=100	
AVP: Inband-Security-Id(299) l=12 f=-M- val=NO_INBAND_SECURITY (0)	
AVP: Acct-Application-Id(259) l=12 f=-M- val=Diameter Base Accounting (3)	

0030	00 d8 e7 0b 81 46 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 01 00 00	.....F.. .....
0040	00 00 00 00 01 01 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00	..... ..J.gp
0050	00 00 00 00 01 08 40 00 00 1f 62 61 63 6b 65 6a	.....@. ..backe
0060	64 2e 65 61 70 2e 74 65 73 74 62 65 64 2e 61 61	..d.eap.te stbed.aa
0070	61 00 00 00 01 28 40 00 00 17 65 61 70 2e 74 65	..a....(@. ..eap.te
0080	73 74 62 65 64 2e 61 61 61 00 00 00 01 16 40 00	..stbed.aa a....@.
0090	00 0c 4b ed 16 77 00 00 01 01 40 00 00 0e 00 01	..K..w.. ..@.....
00a0	c0 a8 69 14 00 00 00 00 01 01 40 00 00 1a 00 02	..i..... ..@.....
00b0	fd e4 2c 6e 55 c4 01 05 0a 00 27 ff fe 0b 78 59	..,nU... ..'....xy
00c0	00 00 00 00 01 0a 40 00 00 0c 00 00 00 00 00 00	.....@. ....
00d0	01 0d 00 00 00 14 66 72 65 65 44 69 61 6d 65 74	.....fr eeDiamet
00e0	65 72 00 00 01 0b 00 00 00 0c 00 00 00 64 00 00	..er..... ..d..
00f0	01 2b 40 00 00 0c 00 00 00 00 00 00 01 03 40 00	..+@..... ..@..
0100	00 0c 00 00 00 05 .....	.....

Diameter Protocol (diameter...) [P...] Profile: ss7

## 5.1. Auditor's bias #1

### Open Standards doesn't mean vision

- Diameter
  - Nearly every parameter is optional
- Result
  - Nobody knows what is a valid combination
    - To test/fuzz/inject
- Combinational explosion
  - Sequence/Dialogue/Flow
  - AVP combination
  - AVP values
  - Fuzzed parameter
- Even manufacturers don't know how to successfully instrument the Device Under Test
- Fuzzer Support is not Fuzzer successful triggering

## 5.2 Auditor's bias #2

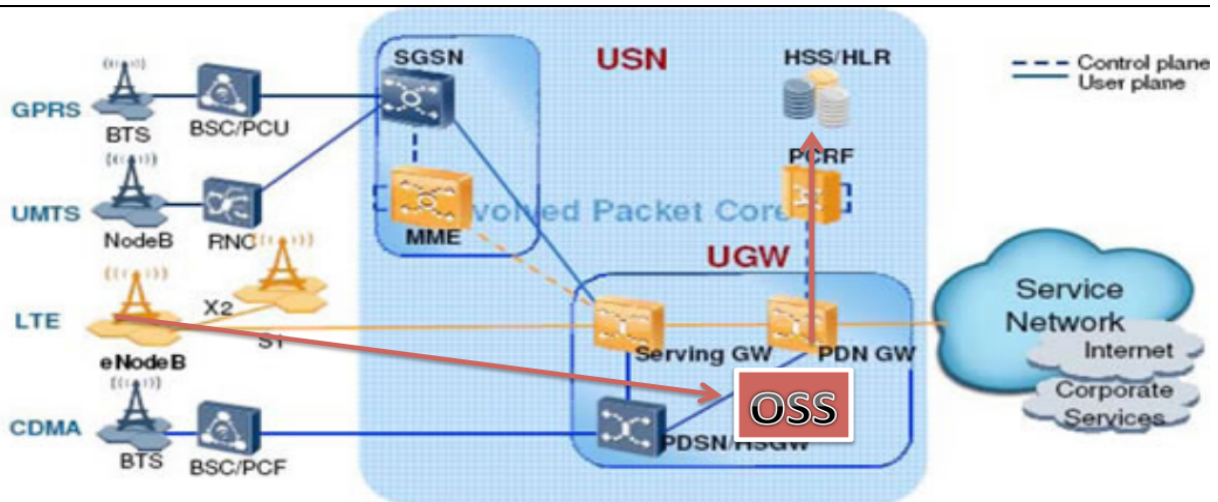
Fuzzing is a deep as fuzzer goes

- Fuzzer never go deep enough
  - Commercial fuzzer
    - 0 trigger/1000 iteration
  - Standard own fuzzer
    - 13 triggers/1000 iterations
- Need target-specific development
  - Customised own fuzzer:
    - 85 triggers/100 iterations

### 5.2.1 LTE: New risk with Diameter

- Diameter information network dissemination
- Diameter awesomeness
  - Distribution/centralisation
  - Its own evil side
- Present in many databases
  - HSS, SDM/SDR, CUD
- The goal was to centralise
- The result is one more database

### 5.2.2 LTE Huawei Specific



Source: 3GPP.org

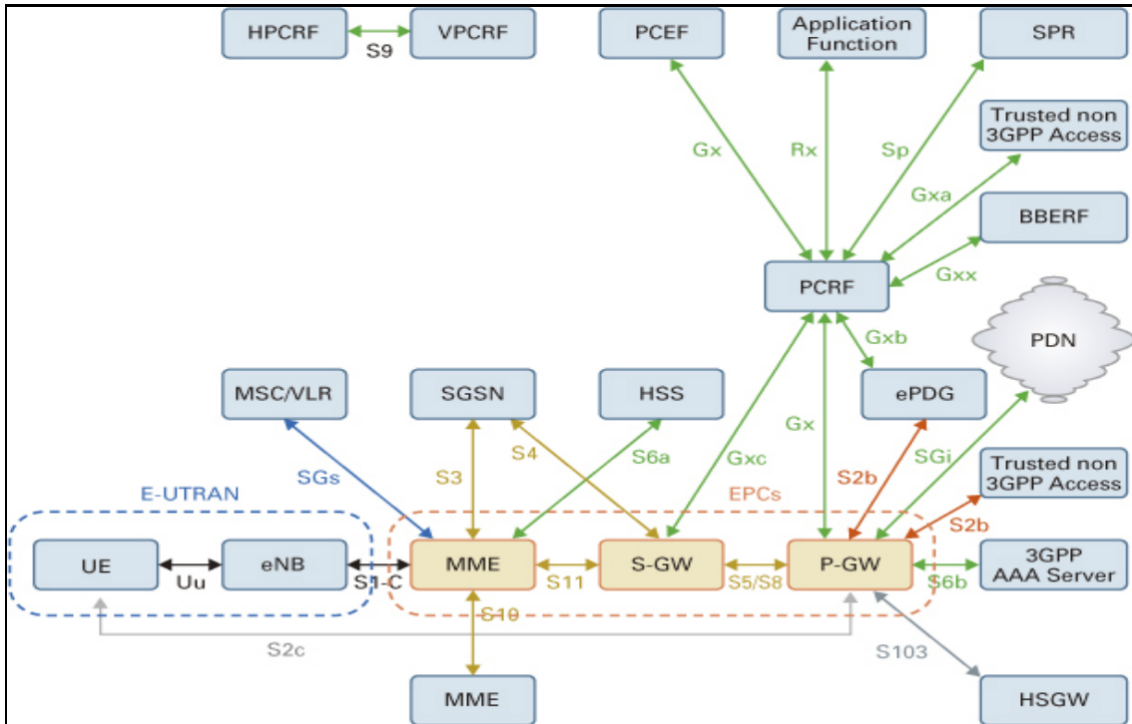
- USN = SGSN + MME
- UGW = SeGW + SGW + PDN GW/PGW



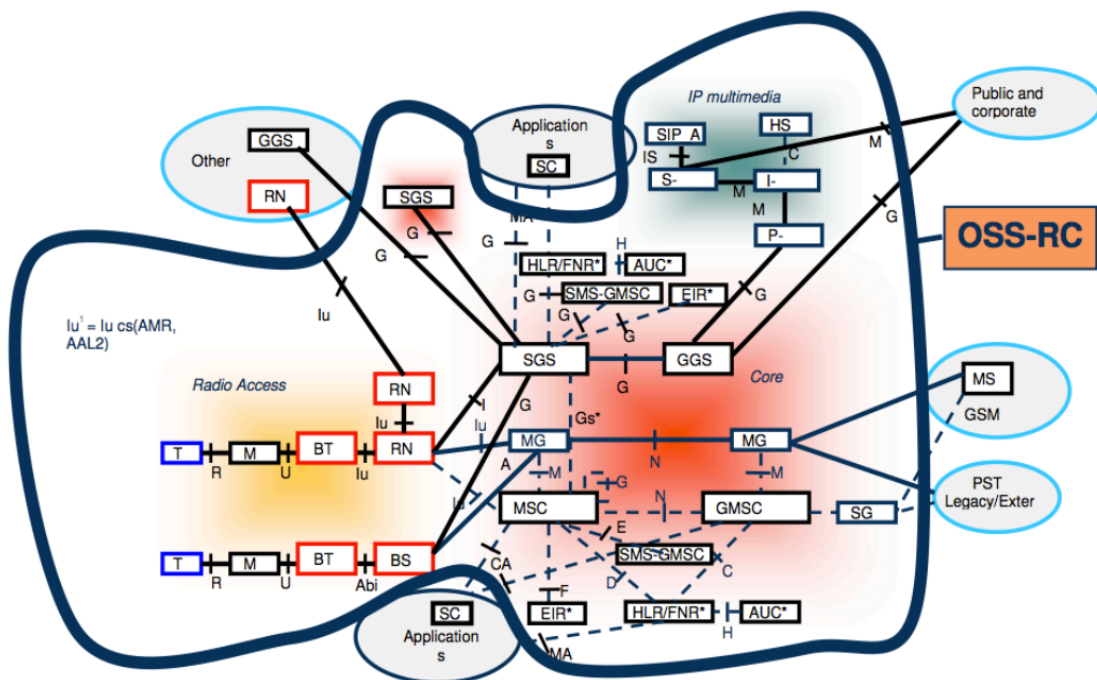
- ```
lea     eax, (aInsertIntoTbl - 818D8ACh)[ebx] ; "insert into TBL_RES_FRAMEWORK (I_NEID, "...
mov     [esp+8], eax
mov     dword ptr [esi], aInsertIntoTbl db 'insert into TBL_RES_FRAMEWORK (I_NE'
lea     eax, [ebp+var_4] db 'ID, I_WORKSPACEID, SU_SCHEMA)'
mov     [esi], eax db 'values('
mov     [esi+4], eax db 'd,%d,',27h,'%s',27h,')',0
```



### LTE EPC functional plane, no OAM



### Add OAM: complexity explosion



## 5.3 Auditor's bias #3

Manual vision is always incomplete

- Need some automation
- 200 APNs \* 16 million IPs == necessity for a dedicated scanner
  - Each valid GTP tunnel is a new 16 millions IPs to scan
  - Address space explosion
- You CANNOT do it manually
  - You CANNOT do it without specific scanners

### 5.3.1 Pwning MME: Hardcoded encryption keys

```
5
6 package com.huawei.install.util;
7
8 import java.io.PrintStream;
9
10 public final class DES
11 {
12
13     public DES()
14     {
15         key_schedule = new int[32];
16         IV0 = 0;
17         IV1 = 0;
18         byteKey = "Y[REDACTED].substring(0, 8).getBytes();
19     }
20
21     public char[] encrypt(byte tmpsrc[], int srcOff, byte dest[], int destOff, int len, boolean bCrypt)
22     {
23         int out[] = new int[2];
24         int iv0 = IV0;
25         int iv1 = IV1;
26         int end = srcOff + len;
```

P1 VKB CVID#485

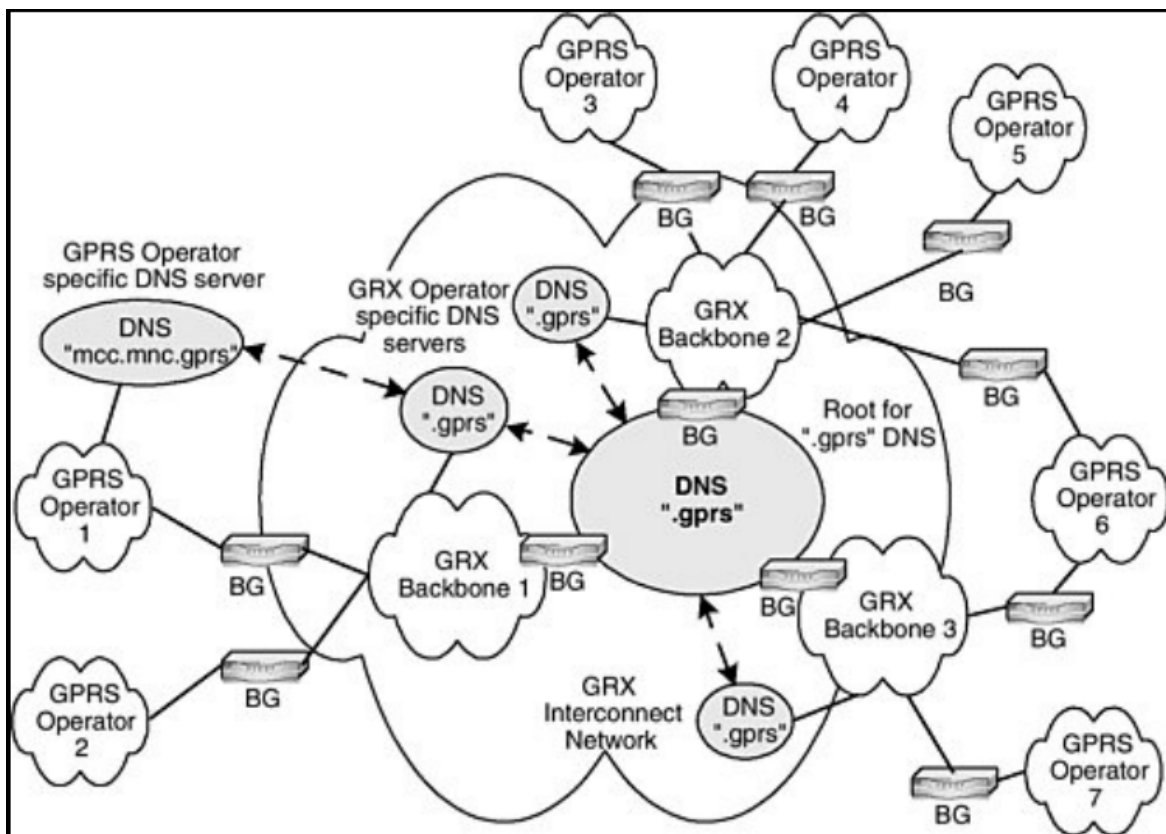
DES...Hardcoded keys everywhere

### 5.3.2 Legacy PS Interfaces of interest to LTE

- Gi : Interface from GGSN to Internet
- Gn : Interface between SGSN and other SGSN and (internal) GGSN
- Gp : Interface between Internal SGSN and external GGSN (GRX used here)

### 5.3.3 eDNS vs iDNS

- Leaks to Internet
- Passive DNSmon
- Leaks to GPRS
- Leaks to 3G data
- Leaks to LTE EPC



### 5.3.4 Legacy GPRS / UMTS

- GRX
- TLD/Domain . gprs
- Quite monolithic
  - APN
  - RAI
  - rai<RAI>. Mnc08. Mcc204.gprs
- Only APNs and “some” network element

## 5.3.5 IMS DNS

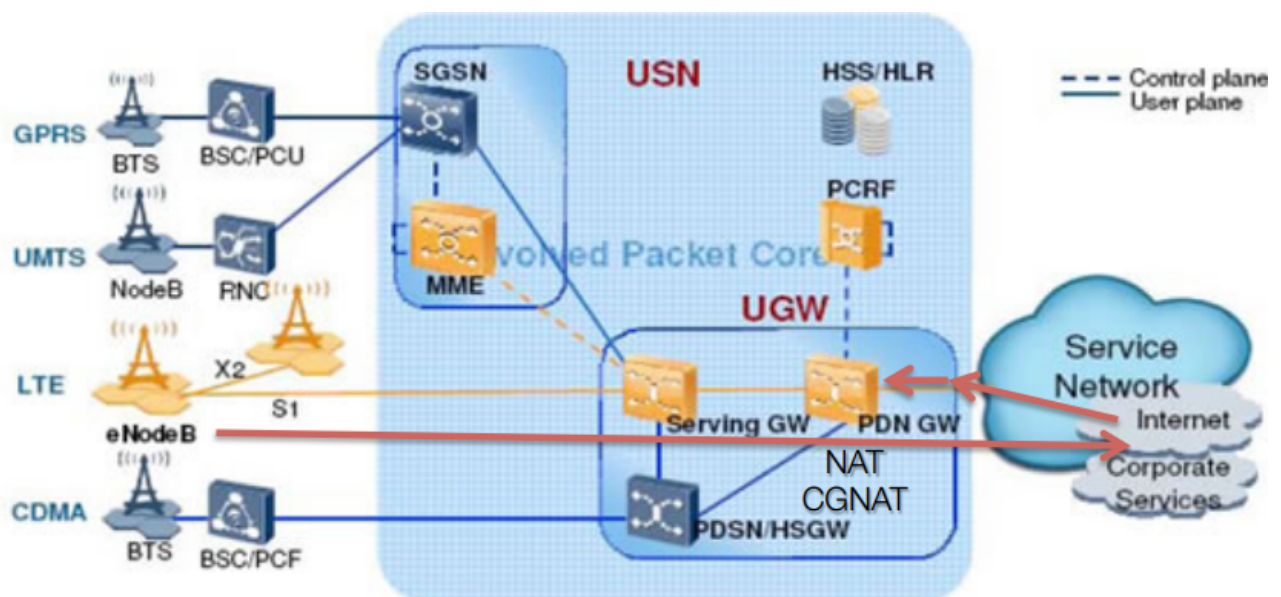
- 3gppnetwork.org
- Supports and lists all Network Element
  - LAC
  - RAC
- Examples
  - rac<RAC>.lac<LAC>.mnc08.mcc204.gprs

## 5.3.6 LTE EPC DNS

- Same as IMS DNS but extended
- Supports and lists most SA EPC Network Elements
  - MME
  - SGW
- Examples
  - mmec<MMEC>.mmegi<MMEGI>.mme.epc.mnc99.mcc208.3gppnetwork.org

## 5.3.7 Pwning from LTE mobile

- Infrastructure Reverse path protection
- LTE Mobile data access
- RFC1918 leaks (sometimes)
- Datacom IP infrastructure access (currently more usual)



Source: 3GPP.org

## 5.3.8 Pwning from external

### Direct MML access from Internet

- Pawning from external without any reverse path trick
- Shodan doesn't work on these
- MML attack surface exposed

|    |                    |                |                     |         |
|----|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------|
| 1  | 84.XXX.XXX.XXX:+++ | UGW-HUAWEI     | 2013-04-09 02:38:14 | <-- LTE |
| 2  | 84.XXX.XXX.XXX:+++ | UGW-HUAWEI     | 2013-04-09 07:51:29 | <-- LTE |
| 3  | 200.XX.XXX.XXX:+++ | GGSN-HUAWEI    | 2013-04-09 04:31:47 |         |
| 4  | 200.XX.XXX.XXX:+++ | GGSN-HUAWEI    | 2013-04-09 04:31:47 |         |
| 5  | 202.XX.XXX.XXX:+++ | HUAWEI UMG8900 | 2013-04-09 06:13:50 |         |
| 6  | 202.XX.XXX.XXX:+++ | HUAWEI UMG8900 | 2013-04-09 05:01:03 |         |
| 7  | 202.XX.XXX.XXX:+++ | HUAWEI UMG8900 | 2013-04-09 04:56:49 |         |
| 8  | 202.XX.XXX.XXX:+++ | HUAWEI UMG8900 | 2013-04-09 05:04:31 |         |
| 9  | 202.XX.XXX.XXX:+++ | HUAWEI UMG8900 | 2013-04-09 05:01:18 |         |
| 10 | 202.XX.XXX.XXX:+++ | HUAWEI UMG8900 | 2013-04-09 05:02:29 |         |
| 11 | 203.XX.XXX.XXX:+++ | HUAWEI UMG8900 | 2013-04-09 09:55:35 |         |
| 12 | 201.XX.XXX.XXX:+++ | UGW-HUAWEI     | 2013-04-09 08:40:38 | <-- LTE |
| 13 | 219.XX.XXX.XXX:+++ | PDSN-HUAWEI    | 2013-04-09 08:02:12 |         |
| 14 | 200.XX.XXX.XXX:+++ | PDSN-HUAWEI    | 2013-04-09 04:25:21 |         |

## 5.4 Auditor's bias #4

### Testbed is always more secure

- Testbed is more secure than production
  - Legacy impact
  - Scalability impact
  - There's always something more on the production network
- Audit is often only permitted in testbed
  - Liability
  - Potential for Denial of Service
- Result
  - Attackers advantage
  - Production goes untested

### 5.4.1 Technical Capacity & Knowledge issue

- Who
  - Can audit all new LTE protocols and legacy protocols
  - Has expertise on the architecture & vendors equipment
- Guarantee
  - Scanning quality
  - Coverage on all protocols & arch (CSFB, IMS, Hybrid, SCharge)
- Cover all perimeters and accesses
  - APNs
  - GRX & IPX accesses
  - Split DNS
  - User plane and control plane

## Conclusion

- LTE is supposed to be built with security
  - Difference between standardisation and real security
  - Network Equipment Vendors are still lagging
- Opening up of the technology
  - Good: deeper independent security research
- Operators
  - Still disinformed by vendors
  - Security through obscurity in 20..!
  - Some are getting proactive

