# BLOCK THE THREAT BEFORE IT CONNECTS:

#### **DNS RPZ AS A TACTICAL SHIELD**

### #whoami



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A report on global cybersecurity trends

In 2023:

**493.2 million** phishing attacks reported **446,234** BEC cases detected worldwide

This led to global losses of **\$6.3 billion** in 2025.

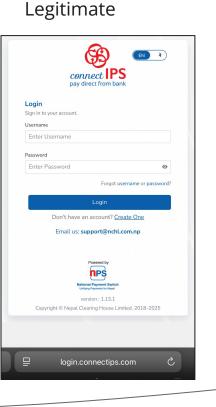


Source: Trend Micro, Cloudflare, Keepnet Labs

SN	Catagoris	No. of Case
1	Social Media Hacked/Fake ID	441
2	Lottery/Gift/Money पठाएको सम्बन्धि	442
3	Online Job/Loan	1926
4	CryptoCurrency/Binance/Forex Trade/Online Invest	176
5	बैंक तथा वालेट अफिसबाट बोलेको	326
6	Online Marketplace/ Online Shoping	2544
7	PTE/Interview Date Book	64
8	Bank/Wallet Hacked (OTP/Physhing Link)	188
9	Ransomeware & Malware attack scam	0
10	Others	283
12	Master Card/Gaming/Coin/UC/ Money Exchange	190
13	Video Sharing & Blackmailing	37
14	Benificiary (अपुताली)	20
15	Benificiary (अपुताली) कोठा खोजिदिने	25
16	बैदेशिक रोजगारको प्रलोभन	48
Total		6710

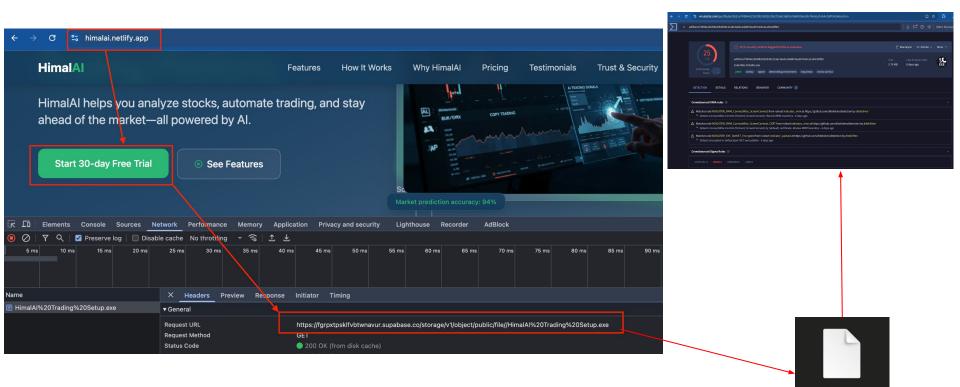






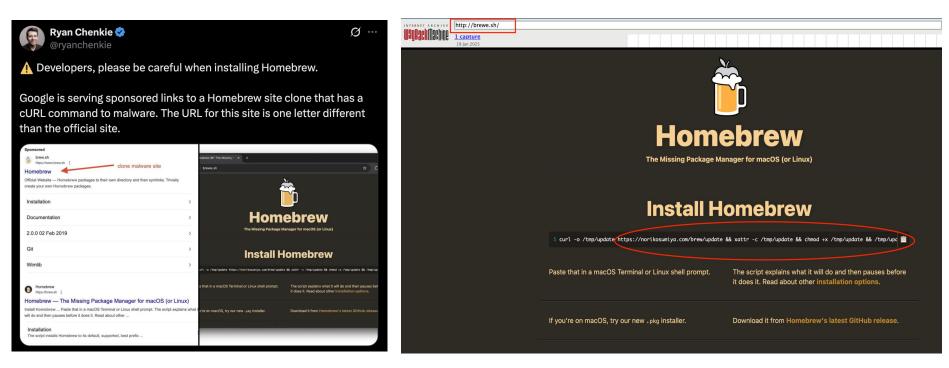
#### Non-Legitimate

Login Sign in to your account.	
Username	
Enter Username	
Password	
Enter Password	0
	Powered by
Nation	nal Payment Switch
	rsion : 1.13.1
Copyright © Nepal Cle	aring House Limited. 2018-2025
□ login.co	onnectlps.com
	nnactins com

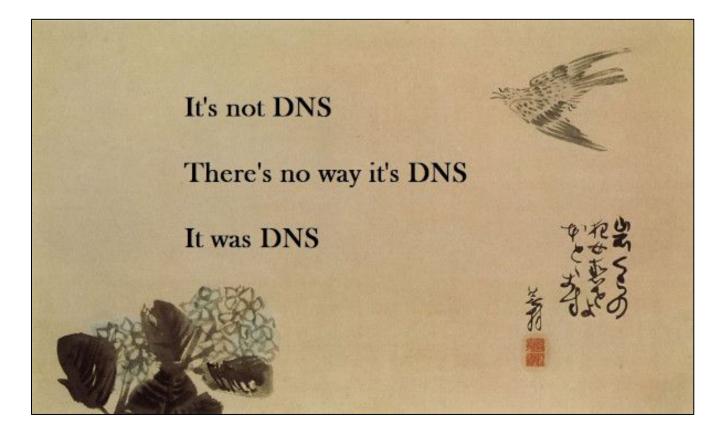


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### **Malicious Downloads**



#### haiku (a Japanese poem) about DNS



# **Evolution of DNS**

**Early Days:** Expensive, isolated computers; name mapping via sticky notes.

**HOSTS.TXT:** Shared text file via FTP; worked briefly but didn't scale. **Growth Challenge:** File size and bandwidth demands became unmanageable.

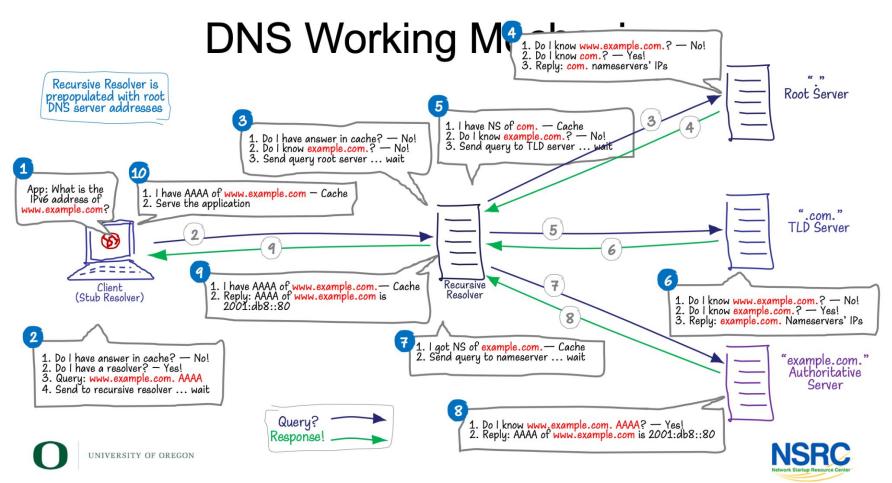
DNS Standardized: Defined in RFC 1034/1035; uses UDP/TCP port 53.

**Modern DNS:** Stores IPs, email routes, web services, GIS data, public

keys.



HOSTS.TXT							
	-						
	_						
	$\sim$						
~~~	$\sim$						
~~	$\sim$						
	$\sim$						

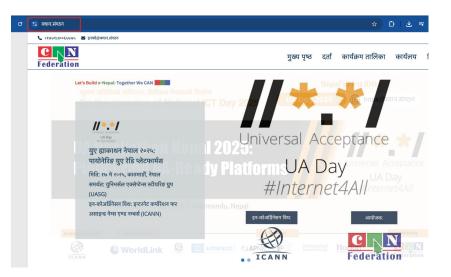


### **IDNs and Punycode**

 IDN: Internationalized Domain Name (<u>RFC</u> <u>3492</u>)

 Uses an ASCII encoding called "Punycode" to represent non-english characters in domain names

 <u>https://xn--11b4b9b3b.xn--i1b6b1a6a</u> is equivalent to <u>https://क्यान.संगठन</u>



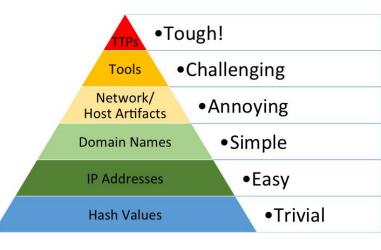
### The Pyramid of Pain (by David J. Bianco)

**DNS:** The Starting Point of Most Internet Activity

**Domain Names:** Inexpensive and Widely Abused by Threat Actors

DNS as a Strategic Defense Layer

**DNS Indicators:** A Valuable Resource for Threat Hunting



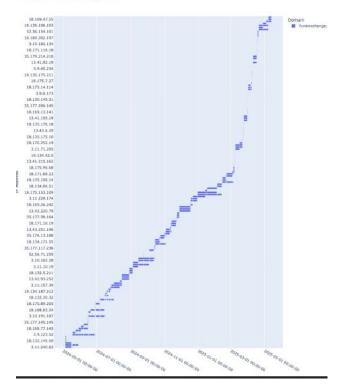
https://detect-respond.blogspot.com/2013/03/the-pyramid-of-pain.html



Sometimes it's fascinating to see how some domain names constantly rotate the IP addresses and the network infrastructure they point to.

Here's a quick look at one such domain over time 👇 FYI, this is not fast flux.

#### **#DNS #threatintelligence**



Sometimes it's fascinating to see how some domain names constantly rotate the IP addresses and the network infrastructure they point to.

# **Suspicious DNS Activity Patterns**

#### **Domain Generation Algorithm (DGAs)**

Malicious domains created using automated algorithms to evade detection.

#### **Fast Flux Hosting**

Rapidly changing DNS records to hide phishing and malware sites.

#### **Recently Registered Domains**

Domains newly created, often used for short-term malicious campaigns.

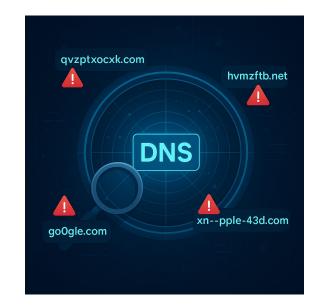
# **Suspicious DNS Activity Patterns**

#### **Deceptively Similar Domains**

Domains that resemble legitimate ones to trick users (e.g., go0gle.com instead of <u>google.com</u>).

#### **Punycode Exploits**

Use of Unicode characters in domain names to mimic trusted websites (e.g., xn--pple-43d.com for apple.com).



### **Protective DNS (DNS RPZ) Overview**

#### What is DNS RPZ?:

- Vendor-neutral DNS-based firewall mechanism (aligned with NSA & CISA best practices).
- DNS Firewall works on recursive DNS servers
- Uses threat intelligence zone files to enforce domain-level policies.
- RFC: <u>https://tools.ietf.org/html/draft-ietf-dnsop-dns-rpz-00</u>
- These "*DNS Firewalls*" are widely used in fighting Internet crime and abuse.

# **Protective DNS (DNS RPZ)**

#### **Supported Platforms:**

- BIND 9.10+, PowerDNS, Unbound.
- Over 91% percent malware uses DNS(As Cisco 2016 Annual Cyber security report)
- Use Of DNS Firewalls Could Reduce 33% Of All Cybersecurity Breaches.
- According to the study, DNS firewalls might have prevented \$10 billion in data breach losses from the 11,000 incidents in the past five years.

### **Unbound DNS for RPZ**

- Features:
  - Validating, recursive, caching DNS resolver.
  - Supports DNSSEC, IPv6, DNS-over-TLS (DoT), DNS-over-HTTPS (DoH).
  - Aggressive NSEC/NSEC3 caching to prevent DNS enumeration.
  - RPZ for filtering/blocking malicious domains.
  - Open-source, maintained by NLnet Labs.
- RPZ Trigger Actions:

	1. LOCAL DATA				
	2. NXDOMAIN 3. DROP 4. NODATA				
2. CLIENTIP IP ADDRESS					
3. RESPONSE IP ADDRESS					
4. NSIP	5. TCP-ONLY				
5. NSDNAME	6. PASSTHRU				





# **Implementation Challenges**

- Bypassing Corporate DNS:
  - Users may configure alternative resolvers (e.g., 1.1.1.1, 8.8.8.8),
     bypassing RPZ protections.

- Mitigation:
  - Endpoint security solutions (e.g., enforce DNS settings via group policies, use firewall rules to block non-corporate DNS traffic).

## **Implementation Challenges**

#### • False Positives:

- Overblocking legitimate domains due to inaccurate threat intelligence.
- Mitigation: Regularly update and validate RPZ feeds, implement whitelisting.

#### • Configuration Complexity:

- Managing RPZ zone files and policies.
- Mitigation: Use version control (e.g., Git) for configuration management.

# Enhancing DNS RPZ with Threat Intelligence

#### • Sources:

- Free/community threat intelligence feeds: Spamhaus, URLhaus, StevenBlack, <u>certhole</u>.
- Community-maintained blocklists
- Internal corporate policies
- Integration:
  - Automate feed updates in Unbound or BIND.
  - Monitor and log blocked queries for analysis.

#### **RPZ Sources**

#### scripttiger.github.io/alts/

#### MCompressed

The same as the compressed format except it's only halfway compressed to a 5-domain maximum per line instead of the 9 domains per line in the fully compressed format. Some use balance to work better on their systems.

\* = Formats marked with an asterisk ("\*") denote formats which take advantage of the higher flexibility afforded them and prune child sub-domains of parent domains already preset example, a domain assets analytics foo.com will be dropped from the list if either analytics foo.com or foo.com are already present on the list. The same example, analytics foo.com if foo.com is already present on the list. However, if only assets analytics foo.com is present on the list, then bonc com will not be blocked.

Hosts File Type	Download
Unified hosts = (adware + malware)	FQDN   <u>RFQDN</u>   <u>Adblock   dnsmasq</u>   <u>Unbound   RPZ   Privoxy</u>   <u>IPv4 IPv6   Compressed   MCompressed</u>
Unified hosts + fakenews	FQDN   <u>RFQDN</u>   <u>Adblock</u>   <u>dnsmasq</u>   <u>Unbound</u>   <u>RFZ</u>   <u>Privoxy</u>   <u>IPv4</u> <u>IPv6</u>   <u>Compressed</u>   <u>MCompressed</u>
Unified hosts + gambling	FQDN   <u>RFQDN</u>   <u>Adblock</u>   <u>dnsmasq</u>   <u>Unbound</u>   <u>RFZ</u>   <u>Privoxy</u>   <u>IPv4_IPv6</u>   <u>Compressed</u>   <u>MCompressed</u>
Unified hosts + pom	FQDN   RFQDN   Adblock   dnsmasq   Unbound   RPZ   Privoxy   IPv4_IPv6   Compressed   MCompressed
Unified hosts + social	FQDN   <u>RFQDN</u>   <u>Adblock</u>   <u>dnsmasq</u>   <u>Unbound</u>   <u>RFQ</u>   <u>Privoxy</u>   <u>IPv4_IPv6</u>   <u>Compressed</u>   <u>MCompressed</u>
Unified hosts + fakenews + gambling	FQDN   RFQDN   Adblock   dnsmasq   Unbound   RPZ   Privoxy   IPv4_IPv6   Compressed   MCompressed
Unified hosts + fakenews + porn	FQDN   RFQDN   Adblock   dnsmasq   Unbound   RPZ   Privoxy   IPv4_IPv6   Compressed   MCompressed
Unified hosts + fakenews + social	FQDN   RFQDN   Adblock   dnsmasq   Unbound   RPZ   Privoxy   IPv4_IPv6   Compressed   MCompressed
Unified hosts + gambling + porn	FQDN   RFQDN   Adblock   dnsmasq   Unbound   RPZ   Privoxy   IPv4_IPv6   Compressed   MCompressed
Unified hosts + gambling + social	FQDN   RFQDN   Adblock   dnsmasq   Unbound   RPZ   Privoxy   IPv4_IPv6   Compressed   MCompressed
Unified hosts + porn + social	FQDN   <u>RFQDN</u>   <u>Adblock   dnsmasq</u>   <u>Unbound   RPZ   Privoxy</u>   <u>IPv4 IPv6   Compressed   MCompressed</u>
Unified hosts + fakenews + gambling + porn	FQDN   RFQDN   Adblock   dnsmasq   Unbound   RPZ   Privoxy   IPv4_IPv6   Compressed   MCompressed
Unified hosts + fakenews + gambling + social	FQDN   RFQDN   Adblock   dnsmasq   Unbound   RPZ   Privoxy   IPv4_IPv6   Compressed   MCompressed
Unified hosts + fakenews + porn + social	FQDN   RFQDN   Adblock   dnsmasq   Unbound   RPZ   Privoxy   IPv4_IPv6   Compressed   MCompressed
Unified hosts + gambling + porn + social	FQDN   RFQDN   Adblock   dnsmasq   Unbound   RPZ   Privoxy   IPv4_IPv6   Compressed   MCompressed
Unified hosts + fakenews + gambling + porn + social	FQDN   RFQDN   Adblock   dnsmasq   Unbound   RPZ   Privoxy   IPv4_IPv6   Compressed   MCompressed

#### Using Cronjob and bash script

**Automated Feed Update Mechanisms** 

```
#!/bin/bash
LOG_FILE="/var/log/rpz_update.log"
log() {
  echo "$(date '+%Y-%m-%d %H:%M:%S') - $1" | tee -a "$LOG_FILE"
declare -A rpz sources=(
  ["https://scripttiger.github.io/alts/rpz/blacklist.txt"]="pro.plus.rpz"
  ["https://urlhaus.abuse.ch/downloads/rpz/"]="urlhaus.rpz"
mkdir -p /etc/unbound/rpz
log "===== Starting RPZ Update ====="
# Download and process each URL
for url in "${!rpz sources[0]}"; do
  filename="${rpz_sources[$url]}"
  tmp_file="/tmp/$filename"
  log "Downloading $url to $tmp_file..."
  wget -q -0 "$tmp_file" "$url"
  if [[ -s "$tmp_file" ]]; then
    log "Success: $filename downloaded and is not empty. Moving to /etc/unbound/rpz/"
    mv "$tmp_file" /etc/unbound/rpz/
  else
    log "Warning: Failed to download or empty file $filename. Skipping."
    rm -f "$tmp_file"
  fi
done
# Set ownership and permissions
chown -R unbound:unbound /etc/unbound/rpz
chmod 400 /etc/unbound/rpz/*
systemctl restart unbound
if [[ $? -eq 0 ]]; then
 log "Unbound service restarted successfully."
else
  log "Error: Failed to restart unbound service."
```

#### **RPZ Samples**

—	
<pre>root@rabinraj:/etc/unbound/rpz# ls gamblind.rpz porn.rpz pro.plus.rpz social_media.rpz unifiedhosts_fakenews root@rabinraj:/etc/unbound/rpz# head -n 50 unifiedhosts_fakenews.rpz ; Title: StevenBlack/hosts with the fakenews extension ; ; This hosts file is a merged collection of hosts from reputable sources, ; with a dash of crowd sourcing via GitHub</pre>	s.rpz urlhaus.rpz
, ; Date: 21 May 2025 01:44:43 (UTC) ; Extensions added to this file: fakenews ; Number of unique domains: 175,241	
, Fetch the latest version of this file: https://raw.githubusercontent.com/S news/hosts ; Project home page: https://github.com/StevenBlack/hosts ; Project releases: https://github.com/StevenBlack/hosts/releases ;	tevenBlack/hosts/master/alternates/fake
; ====================================	
<pre>;====================================</pre>	RPZ NXDOMAIN Lists
*.coccyxwickimp.com CNAME . webmail-who-int.000webhostapp.com CNAME .	

#### **Unbound Configurations**

root@rabinraj:/etc/unbound# cat unbound.conf
server:
 root=hints: "/var/lib/unbound/root.hints"

root-nints: '/var/lib/unbound/root.nin
# Verbosity: 4
use-syslog: yes
logfile: "/var/log/unbound.log"
log-time-ascii: yes

# DNSSEC auto-trust-anchor-file: "/var/lib/unbound/root.key" val-log-level: 1 # Basic validation logging

# Privacy
qname-minimisation: yes
hide-identity: yes
hide-version: yes
rrset-roundrobin: yes

 # RPZ Configuration (if needed)
module-config: "respip validator iterator"
rpz:

name: "website\_blocking" zonefile: "/etc/unbound/u/mal.rpz" rpz-action-override: nxdomain

rpz:

name: "urlhaus"
zonefile: "/etc/unbound/rpz/urlhaus.rpz"
rpz-action-override: nxdomain

rpz:

name: "unifiedhosts\_fakenews"
zonefile: "/etc/unbound/rpz/unifiedhosts\_fakenews.rpz"
rpz-action-override: nxdomain

rpz:

name: "social\_media"
zonefile: "/etc/unbound/rpz/social\_media.rpz"
rpz-action-override: passthru

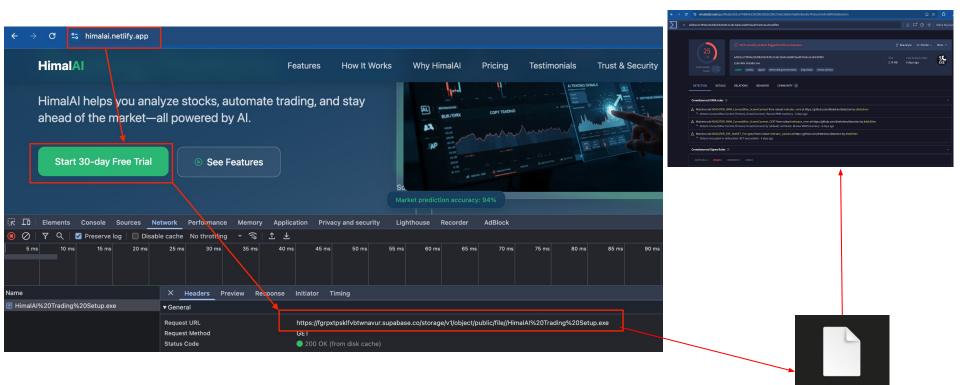
R root@unbound-AHV: /etc/unbound

local-zone: "zmgy9hxz0p.autograalmann.de" always nxdomain local-zone: "zmienaktualizacje.win" always nxdomain local-zone: "zmienienie-koloru.blogspot.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zmienkolorfejsazafree.blogspot.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zmienkolory.blogspot.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zmien-motyw.blogspot.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "z-milosci.pl" always nxdomain local-zone: "zminer.zaloapp.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zmpeo-ori-943.standard.us-east-1.oortstorage.com" always n local-zone: "zmxu.net" always nxdomain local-zone: "zmyslowyklub.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "znajdzbdsmkontakt.pl" always nxdomain local-zone: "znajdz-numer.pl" always nxdomain local-zone: "znajdzprzetargi.pl" always nxdomain local-zone: "znajdzswojfilm.pl" always nxdomain local-zone: "znamcie.pl" always nxdomain local-zone: "znaneleki.pl" always nxdomain local-zone: "znaptag-us.s3.amazonaws.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "znbvscp.info" always nxdomain local-zone: "zobacz24.pl" always nxdomain local-zone: "zobacz-film.pl" always nxdomain local-zone: "zobaczktopodgladaa.blogspot.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zobidesignstudio.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zobifeo.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zocvria.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zoeandio.co.uk" always nxdomain local-zone: "zoeheincis.pro" always nxdomain local-zone: "zoetriumphshiloh.wixsite.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zofiabutik.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zofiadabrowski.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zofiamoda.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zofimoo.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zofoxao.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zogix.top" always nxdomain local-zone: "zogun.run" always nxdomain local-zone: "zohaethnic.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zoioantin.pro" always nxdomain local-zone: "zolmocacus.pro" always nxdomain local-zone: "zoloft.1.p21.info" always nxdomain local-zone: "zoloft.3.p21.info" always nxdomain local-zone: "zoloft.4.p21.info" always nxdomain local-zone: "zoluk.click" always nxdomain local-zone: "zombie.news" always nxdomain local-zone: "zomemiv.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zonajabones.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zonatrix.website" always nxdomain local-zone: "zonedatapro.info" always nxdomain local-zone: "zonefore.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zoneofbrilliance.net" always nxdomain local-zone: "zone-telechargement-albums.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zonevoucher.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zonewedgeshaft.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zongea.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zongliar.site" always nxdomain local-zone: "zonitrextrader-30-ultra.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zonitrextrader30ultra.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zonitrex-trader.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zontesmotosvalencia.net" always nxdomain local-zone: "zontesmotosvlc.net" always nxdomain local-zone: "zoodrawings.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zoofabrika.com" always nxdomain local-zone: "zooqdisany.com" always nxdomain

root@rabinraj:/etc/unbound/rpz# dig coccyxwickimp.com

```
; <<>> DiG 9.18.30-0ubuntu0.22.04.2-Ubuntu <<>> coccyxwickimp.com
;; global options: +cmd
;; Got answer:
;; ->>HEADER<<- opcode: QUERY, status: NXDOMAIN, id: 55740
;; flags: gr aa rd ra; QUERY: 1, ANSWER: 0, AUTHORITY: 0, ADDITIONAL: 1
;; OPT PSEUDOSECTION:
; EDNS: version: 0, flags:; udp: 1232
;; QUESTION SECTION:
;coccyxwickimp.com.
                                IN
                                        Α
;; Query time: 0 msec
;; SERVER: 127.0.0.1#53(127.0.0.1) (UDP)
  WHEN: Sat May 31 20:14:32 +0545 2025
;;
```

;; MSG SIZE rcvd: 46



HimalAl Trading Setup.ex<u>e</u>



Domain Name Security Extensions (DNSSEC) are extensions to the Domain Name System (DNS) that provide:

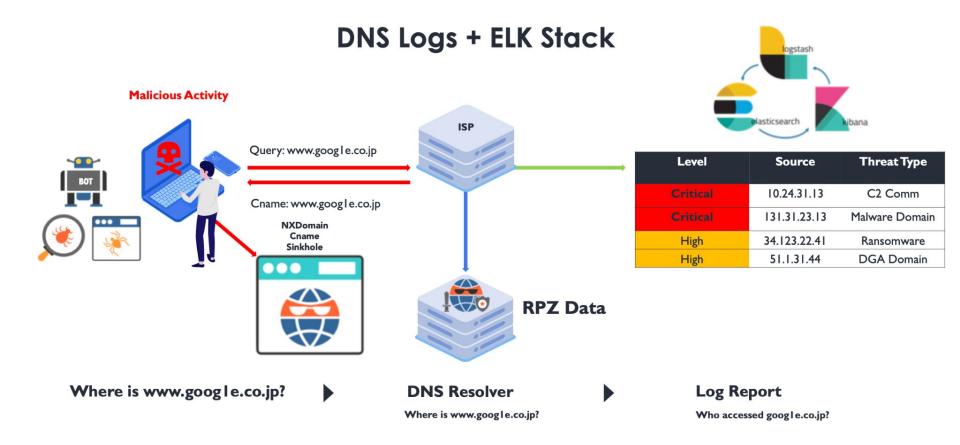
- Authentication of the origin of DNS data
- Integrity of data
- Authentication of denial of existence

redhat@ITD-SYSTEM-PC6:	~\$ dig i	internet	society.or	rg @192.168.17.134 +dns	sec										
; <<>> DiG 9.18.18-Oub ;; global options: +cm ;; Got answer: ;; ->>HEADER<<- opcode ;; flags: qr rd ra ad;	d : QUERY,	status	: NOERROR,	, id: 40302		ssec									
;; OPT PSEUDOSECTION: ; EDNS: version: 0, fl ;; QUESTION SECTION:	ags: do;	udp: 1	232												
;internetsociety.org.		IN	А												
;; ANSWER SECTION:															
internetsociety.org.	292	IN	А	104.18.16.166											
internetsociety.org.			A	104.18.17.166											
internetsociety.org.	292	IN		A 13 2 300 2025051513	2430 20250513112430	0 34505 int	ernetsociety.org	. bpdJEU7fRsnz	z0L8mGfD+SIowGvqy	TJyqW/JL1hYJI	H7mG4ijFOZE	LzD H1/TpK	OhgHUSnB8DtF	R1ELVx3xj	pXvw==
;; Query time: 0 msec ;; SERVER: 192.168.17. ;; WHEN: Wed May 14 18 :: MSG SIZE rcvd: 195	:09:36 +			NDÞ)											28

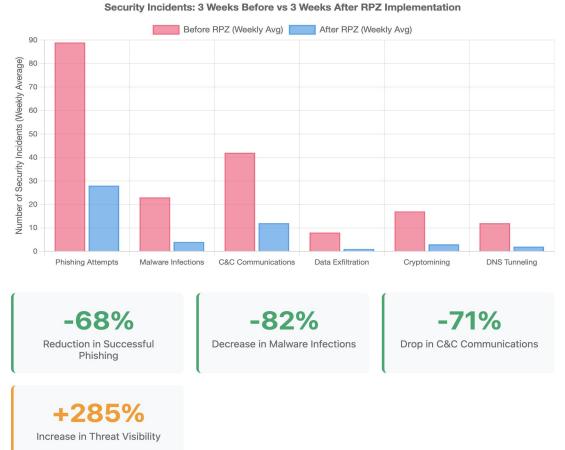
### **DNSSEC and RPZ Synergy**

- DNSSEC Benefits:
  - Authenticates DNS data origin and integrity.
  - Prevents DNS spoofing and cache poisoning.

- Complementary to RPZ:
  - RPZ blocks known malicious domains; DNSSEC ensures data authenticity.
  - Combined approach strengthens overall DNS security.



# Statistics of Pre/Post Deployment of RPZ (piloting on few machines)



#### References

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https://blog.apnic.net/author/geoff-huston/

https://www.nlnetlabs.nl/projects/unbound/

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https://kindns.org/

https://www.isc.org/rpz/

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