

Hunting and Monitoring for On-Chain Attacks

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Researcher-in-Residence, Forta Foundation

About us

Automation Lead at Lido Building solid on-chain and off-chain monitoring tools

Responsible for the quality of major Lido products

Prior to Lido worked for 6 years as a Quality and Automation Engineer Quality assurance Security testing







PhD in Computer Science from Victoria University of Wellington, NZ

Researcher-in-Residence at the Forta **Foundation**

Analyzing attacks Working with community to strengthen attack detection

Prior to Forta worked at Microsoft for 14 years on the Defender product line Security Research Data Science



@cseifert



@christian_forta



Web3 is getting hacked!

Attack Stages Inverse Finance

(\$1.2M)

Funding

Preparation

Exploitation

Money Laundering

Tornado Cash Funding

Suspicious Contract Creation

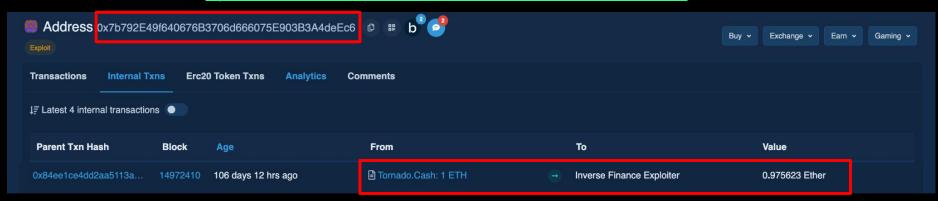
Flashloan Flashbot Tx Tornado Cash Money Laundering



Tornado Cash Funding



Jun-16-2022 08:45:36 AM +UTC - https://etherscan.io/address/0x7b792e49f640676b3706d666075e903b3a4deec6#internaltx







Suspicious Contract Creation



Jun-16-2022 08:47:50 AM +UTC - https://etherscan.io/tx/0xfb5a4d1aef98458f673f301c2e713613662ad621e8f57065a4da58a6401c0b4d

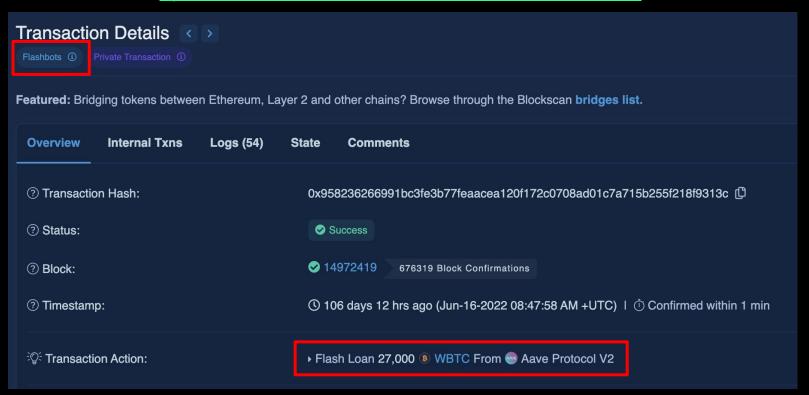
Transactions										
For 0x7b792e49f640676b3706d666075e903b3a4deec6										
Sponsored: 🎢 - 1inch - The most efficient DEX aggregator. Recover up to 95% of gas spendings.Swap now!										
A total of 38 transactions found								First < Page 1 of 1	> Last	
	Txn Hash	Method ①	Block	Age	From		То	Value	Txn Fee	
•	0xfb5a4d1aef98458f673f	0x60806040	14972418	106 days 12 hrs ago	Inverse Finance Exploiter	OUT	■ Contract Creation	0 Ether	0.11407894	



Flashloan/ Flashbot Usage



Jun-16-2022 08:47:58 AM +UTC - https://etherscan.io/address/0x7b792e49f640676b3706d666075e903b3a4deec6#internaltx





Exploit Impact



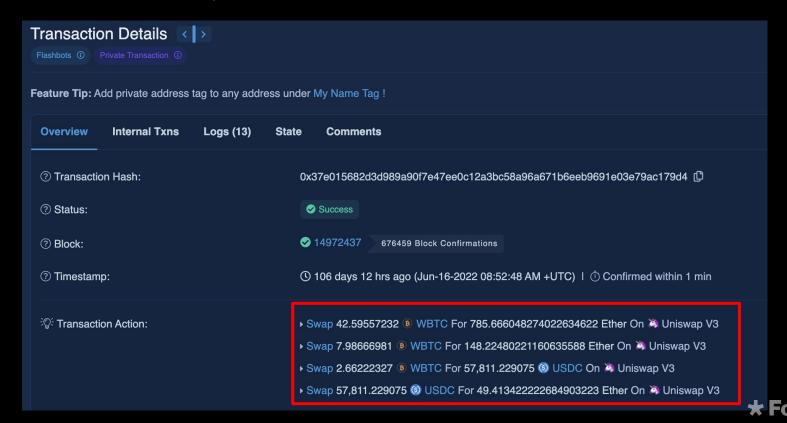
Jun-16-2022 08:47:50 AM +UTC - https://phalcon.blocksec.com/tx/eth/0x958236266991bc3fe3b77feaacea120f172c0708ad01c7a715b255f218f9313c

Balance Changes								
Address	Token	Balance	Value					
<pre>0xf508c58ce37ce40a40997c715075172691f92e2d [R eceiver]</pre>	<pre>anYvCrv3Crypto USDT BUSDT</pre>	+245,337.73387519 +99,976.294967 +53.24446541	-					
anYvCrv3Crypto	<pre>yvCurve-3Crypto anYvCrv3Crypto</pre>	+4,906.75467750397441431	-					
Curve.fi: DAI/USDC/USDT Pool	₩ USDT	-10,099,976.294967	-					
0x464c71f6c2f760dda6093dcb91c24c39e5d6e18c	∰ aWBTC	+0.00004148	-					
aWBTC	(B) WBTC	+24.3	~					
0xd51a-Vyper_contract		-77.54446541 +10,000,000	-					

Money Laundering



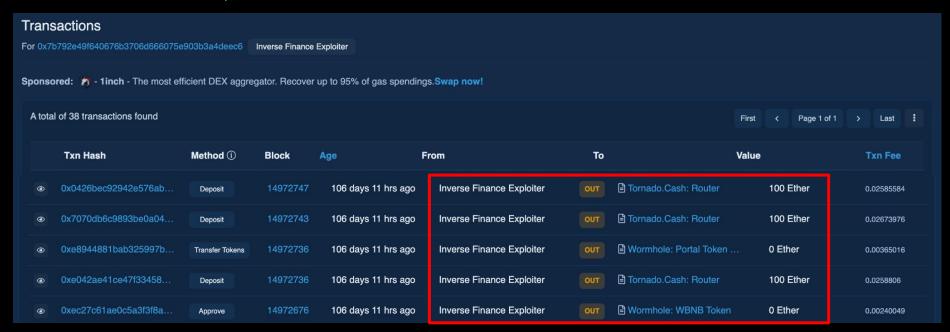
Jun-16-2022 08:47:58 AM +UTC - https://etherscan.io/tx/0x37e015682d3d989a90f7e47ee0c12a3bc58a96a671b6eeb9691e03e79ac179d4





Money Laundering

Jun-16-2022 08:56:47 AM +UTC - https://etherscan.io/tx/0xf9953c26d229c42938f681ce348322c92a5178965a6631a0f09fcadbac16a9d7 Jun-16-2022 08:56:47 AM +UTC - https://etherscan.io/tx/0xec27c61ae0c5a3f3f8a48bbb7b1f38781205ee1b8a978ee83e0b512c1bb6e22b





Comprehensive security strategy

Pre-deployment

- Template contracts
- Audit

Post-deployment

- Bug bounties
- Real-time monitoring and alerting
- Incident/emergency response





Decentralized security camera and alarm system for Web 3

Detection Bots

"Security cameras"

A script (piece of logic) that any developer can write and publish to the Forta Network.

Detection bots tell the network what to watch.

Scan Node

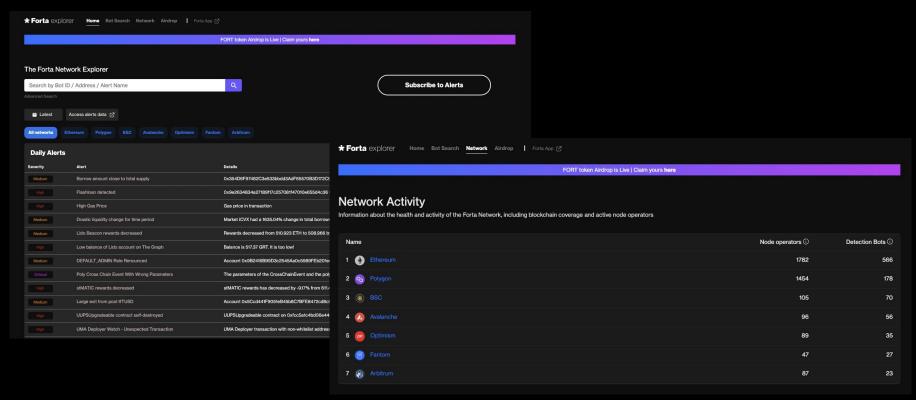
"Alarm system"

Runs the detection bots against each block of transactions.

The nodes power the detection bots, and keep them running 24/7.



Forta Explorer (link)



Attack Stages

Funding

Preparation

Exploitation

Money Laundering

- TC funding
- Exchange funding
- New account
- Bridge funding

- Sleep minting
- Attack contract creation
- Ice Phishing Token Approvals
- Token impersonation

- Flashloan price manipulation
- Flashbot usage
- Ice Phishing Token Transfers
- Rug pulls
- Exploit (reentrancy, failed access control, etc.)

- TC deposits
- Exchange deposits
- Exchange into native tokens
- Bridge deposits
- Wash trading



Attack Stages

Funding Preparation Exploitation Money Laundering

Combine Alerts

Inverse Finance

(\$1.2M)

Tornado Cash Funding

Suspicious Contract Creation Exploit Simulation Flashloan Flashbot Tx Tornado Cash Money Laundering

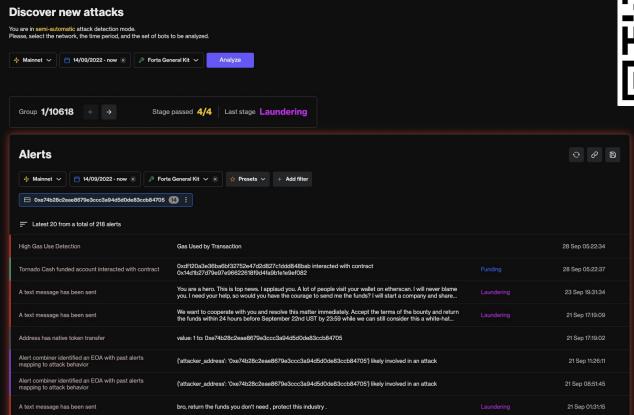
EOA: 0x7b792e4...b3a4deec6

EOA: 0x7b792e49f640676b3706d666075e903b3a4deec6





Attack Exploration (link)









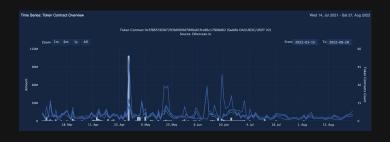
Flash Loan

BotID: 0x55636f5577694c83b84b0687eb77863850c50bd9f6072686c8463a0cbc5566e0 Attack Stage: Exploitation

What is It?

Flash loans are temporary loans (has to be paid back in one transaction) that allows borrowers to obtain large amount of tokens. This is used, for example, for arbitrage.

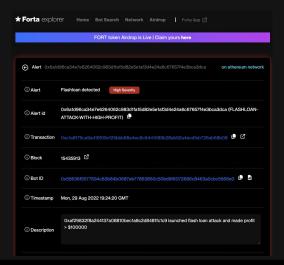
Flash loans are also utilized by attackers to manipulate prices temporarily. This could be used to exploit a vulnerable protocol (e.g. by taking out an undercollateralized loan)



How to detect?

Identify all transactions obtaining a flash loan

Assess whether profit exceeds a particular threshold.





Rug Pulls

BotID: 0x580d14bed37f523d14edcfa83ae87e168ac333a98f70c4f9991357e1b7ee855f Attack Stage: Exploitation

What is It?

Rug pulls are tokens that are hyped by creators. As they are traded on DEXes, creators may dump existing tokens or dump newly created tokens. The price crashes and remaining token holders are left holding the bag of worthless tokens.

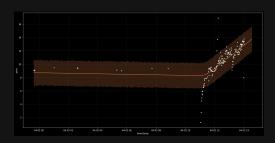


How to detect?

Obtain price information from DEXes (utilizing common ABI)

Trigger on significant price drops.

Price fluctuations are common, however. In order to reduce noise, one needs to apply a time series anomaly detection approach that takes into account historical information (seasonality, volatility).



Exploit Simulation

BotID: 0xe8527df509859e531e58ba4154e9157eb6d9b2da202516a66ab120deabd3f9f6 Attack Stage: Preparation

What is It?

For certain attacks (e.g. economic attacks, reentrancy attacks), attackers need to deploy a smart contract. Several indicators can help to determine whether a smart contract is malicious (e.g. was it created through Tornado Cash funded EOA; is it verified on Etherscan?)

These contracts contain all the code that is needed to execute the exploit.

How to detect?

Upon smart contract deployment, locally fork the chain using Ganache. Invoke all exposed functions (essentially fuzzing the smart contract).

PUSH1 0x80 PUSH1 0x40 MSTORE PUSH1 0x04 CALLDATASIZE PUSH2 0x002d TIMPT PUSH1 0x00 CALLDATALOAD PUSH1 0xe0 SHR DUP1 PUSH4 0xa15db5c5 PUSH2 0x0039 TUMPT DUP1 PUSH4 0xaf8271f7

Assess whether large amounts of tokens are transferred into the attacker's wallet or contract.

Identifies the attack before it is executed on-chain.

Define the Requirements Step 1

Based on threat model define the requirements:

- What is the logic?
- What alerts will the bot emit?
- What data do you need?
- What chains should the bot run on? What differences exist between the chains?

Implement and Test Step 2

Implement using Python/ JavaScript/ TypeScript SDK

Test using unit tests

Test retroactively on existing attack transactions/ blocks

Execute locally against live transaction feed

Deploy and Subscribe Step 3

Deploy in a permissionless way to the Forta Network using the CLI or Forta App. It will be deployed onto several nodes to create redundancy and increase alert reliability.

Log and alert data for the bot can be viewed and monitored through bot stats page.

Alert subscriptions can be configured to receive alerts on Telegram, Slack, Discord and accessed through the GraphQL API.



Get started at:

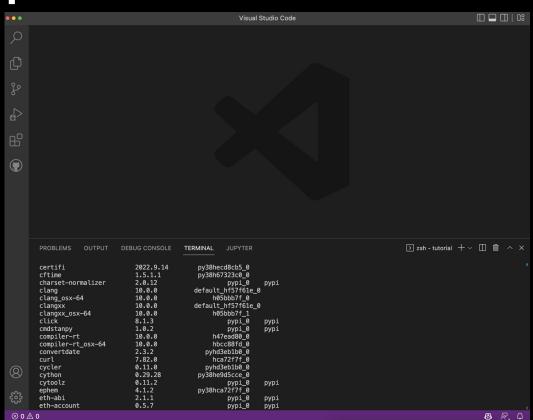
https://docs.forta.network/en/latest/quickstart/





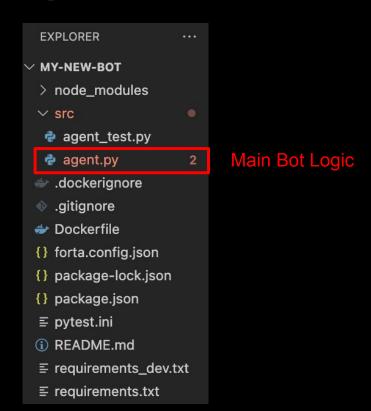
Setup Dev Environment Step 1

- Node.js v12+ (which includes the Node package manager i.e. npm)
- Conda & Python v3.6+ (only if you want to use Python SDK)
- Docker v20+



Initialize Bot Step 2

\$ mkdir my-new-bot
\$ cd my-new-bot
\$ npx forta-agent@latest init
--python

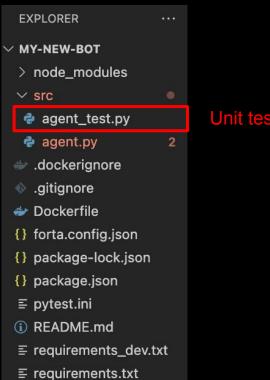






Initialize Bot Step 2

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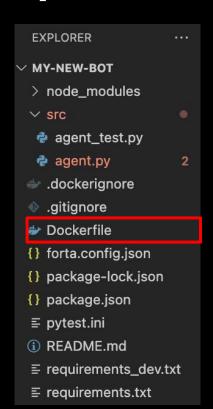


Unit tests



Initialize Bot Step 2

\$ mkdir my-new-bot
\$ cd my-new-bot
\$ npx forta-agent@latest init
--python



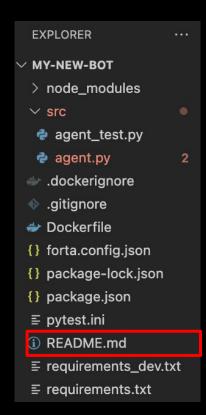
Docker build file





Initialize Bot Step 2

\$ mkdir my-new-bot
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Documentation





Create Documentation Step 3

Capture

- Title
- Description
- Supported Chains
- Alerts
- Test Data

```
# Large Tether Transfer Agent
     ## Description
     This agent detects transactions with large Tether transfers
     ## Supported Chains
      - Fthereum
     - List any other chains this agent can support e.g. BSC
     ## Alerts
     Describe each of the type of alerts fired by this agent
     - FORTA-1

    Fired when a transaction contains a Tether transfer over 10,000 USDT

       - Severity is always set to "low" (mention any conditions where it could be
       something else)
       - Type is always set to "info" (mention any conditions where it could be something
       else)
       - Mention any other type of metadata fields included with this alert
22
      ## Test Data
23
24
     The agent behaviour can be verified with the following transactions:
26
     - 0x3a0f757030beec55c22cbc545dd8a844cbbb2e6019461769e1bc3f3a95d10826 (15,000 USDT) ∧
27
```

- Process Tx
- Filter for USDT events
- Normalize value
- Assess against threshold
- Emit alert

```
def handle_transaction(transaction_event)
    findings = []

# limiting this agent to emit only 5 findings so that the alert feed is not spammer
global findings_count
if findings_count >= 5:
    return findings
```



- Process Tx
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```
def handle transaction(transaction_event) -> list:
    findings = []
   # limiting this agent to emit only 5 findings so that the alert feed is not spamme
   global findings count
   if findings count >= 5:
        return findings
            findings.append(Finding({
                'name': 'High Tether Transfer',
                'description': f'High amount of USDT transferred: {normalized_value}',
                'alert id': 'FORTA-1',
                'severity': FindingSeverity.Low,
                'type': FindingType.Info,
                'metadata': {
                    'to': to,
                    'from': from ,
            }))
            findings_count += 1
   return findings
                                                             * Forta
```

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- Process Tx
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```
ERC20_TRANSFER_EVENT = '{"name":"Transfer","type":"event","anonymous":false,"inputs":[
TETHER_ADDRESS = '0xdAC17F958D2ee523a2206206994597C13D831ec7'
TETHER_DECIMALS = 6
```

```
# filter the transaction logs for any Tether transfers
tether transfer events = transaction event.filter log(
    ERC20 TRANSFER EVENT, TETHER ADDRESS)
for transfer_event in tether_transfer_events:
   # extract transfer event arguments
    to = transfer_event['args']['to']
    from_ = transfer_event['args']['from']
   value = transfer_event['args']['value']
   # shift decimals of transfer value
   normalized value = value / 10 ** TETHER DECIMALS
    # if more than 10,000 Tether were transferred, report it
    if normalized value > 10000:
        findings.append(Finding({
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Test, test, test Step 5

- Unit test
- Backtest
- Live test



Test, test, test Step 5

- Unit test
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## Test Data
 The agent behaviour can be verified with the following transactions:
 - 0x3a0f757030beec55c22cbc545dd8a844cbbb2e6019461769e1bc3f3a95d10826 (15.000 USDT)
(forta) christianseifert@x86_64-apple-darwin13 my-new-bot % npm run tx 0x3a0f757030beec55c22cbc545dd8a8
 44cbbb2e6019461769e1bc3f3a95d10826
 > forta-agent-starter@0.0.1 tx
 > forta-agent run --tx 0x3a0f757030beec55c22cbc545dd8a844cbbb2e6019461769e1bc3f3a95d10826
 1 findings for transaction 0x3a0f757030beec55c22cbc545dd8a844cbbb2e6019461769e1bc3f3a95d10826 {
   "name": "High Tether Transfer".
   "description": "High amount of USDT transferred: 15000.0",
   "alertId": "FORTA-1",
   "protocol": "ethereum",
   "severity": "Low",
   "type": "Info",
   "metadata": {
     "to": "0x191a95DaC026F3A002C66e6C61C484FAb9D65D17",
     "from": "0x02f4F75Ce4498CAfFEA57f5ab0F7D7831D6B1fC6"
   "addresses": []
```



Test, test, test Step 5

- Unit test
- Backtest
- Live test

```
(forta) christianseifert@x86_64-apple-darwin13 my-new-bot % npm run start
  > forta-agent-starter@0.0.1 start
  > npm run start:dev
  > forta-agent-starter@0.0.1 start:dev
  > nodemon --watch src --watch forta.config.json -e py --exec "forta-agent run"
  [nodemon] 2.0.20
  [nodemon] to restart at any time, enter `rs`
  [nodemon] watching path(s): src/**/* forta.config.json
  [nodemon] watching extensions: py
  [nodemon] starting `forta-agent run`
  listening for blockchain data...
  fetching block 15677316...
  0 findings for transaction 0xeee697d5b82e2351dc301a8e6fba58b5298ef8e38e0f7144c33961137a8f2530
  0 findings for transaction 0xae33ad2449e4583e56fdbed4e2e0555f962afb8fcc891348b0c1b91c921d4820
  0 findings for transaction 0x7a98b034f1bef87627c555e46afe29e3e24000000e05b87b29ae260c0d7523c2
  0 findings for transaction 0x4f9cd992f3c3992c7b5267fa8120862a3824a8958cfa6b15ee94c090a9ebedad
  0 findings for transaction 0xdaf21ba63d6c37a6b779bc9ffade7fc6dfe53bf0bdcd3693063500ce172e20b7
  0 findings for transaction 0xeb96067823e1846b137690f6aeabb73adb273d5375468336c193c03a1bd1021a
  0 findings for transaction 0x4ae4b2375b52dfd18bdf525cc5d52a96bcde283d807504cd3a707deb7ca2e0de
  0 findings for transaction 0x7bd1baf996a60c1718e8eb78b49cce0abb8cfd0ceb5f7fc8fef93cdf78cce38f
  0 findings for transaction 0x79116d3c5e0aeb289389fd11008bd1b779ce7927e4be42018f33f28c1aff58e7
  0 findings for transaction 0xac06643b920a3af8821395066df17f33b0dfe78d9752358343f8853e6ff5c3ad
  0 findings for transaction 0xd2a7c1ec929706d9a6858ccc9ca6df7fba1b0e30d67aa2e9d249a5b8bd561738
  0 findings for transaction 0x6c78fb38e111763d35b1868845a22c8f89c8b88b9fc70ec872ace165955bc4fe
  0 findings for transaction 0xa4f45e542b9afa6b52155a6e87d217b41f50d33e9e8f2c5b7fa51caee5419922
  0 findings for transaction 0x0fa0f938b74606a7940bff943922d8dbc0b5eea5e4a70849e04d2a96a645d72c
  0 findings for transaction 0xbef8ab66a94ed1c790b9e8ad21fb66aec1d9c3661401a66c68795e7dadb5094c
  0 findings for transaction 0xcf8c43a2b599fdb14a3453f27ab8d9cb5c9a44b31f5cf9d7ad4068b7349a0b80
  0 findings for transaction 0xf52fab238f460f6cceef806669c0ba73aa28b3fa33424d89a7b1fb8bf4212e3c
  0 findings for transaction 0x140be7900923842db6e8d7471f578cbdeb9e70e3b50f9f2ct0a671f453ed2f39
```

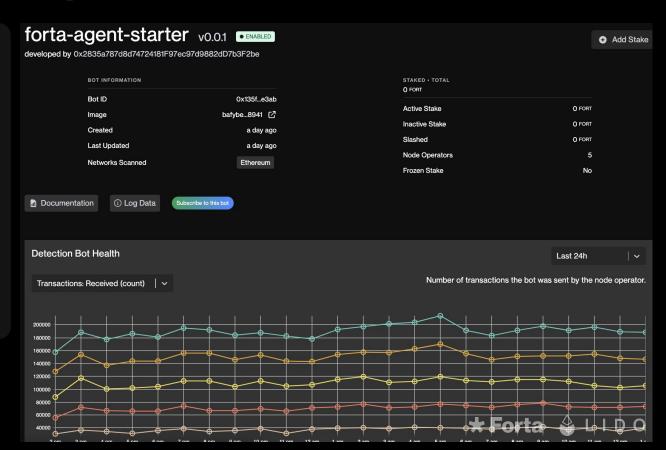
Deploy Step 6

- Deploy using CLI
 - npm run publish
- Need some MATIC

```
pushing agent image to repository...
Using default tag: latest
The push refers to repository [disco.forta.network/forta-agent-starter-intermediate]
a3bd9b377696: Preparing
a3d39cbd2c5e: Preparing
74c6c5766a92: Preparing
debf465db75d: Preparing
5961f4982fbd: Preparing
21f246e23bd3: Preparing
7f30cde3f699: Preparing
fe810f5902cc: Preparing
dfd8c046c602: Preparing
4fc242d58285: Preparing
fe810f5902cc: Waiting
4fc242d58285: Waiting
dfd8c046c602: Waiting
7f30cde3f699: Waiting
21f246e23bd3: Waiting
debf465db75d: Pushed
74c6c5766a92: Pushed
a3d39cbd2c5e: Pushed
7f30cde3f699: Mounted from bafybeidkrwu6dii3aki2qb2m27b57huberunwrpnsrxqxnuqbe7jqfvtwi
fe810f5902cc: Mounted from bafybeidkrwu6dii3aki2qb2m27b57huberunwrpnsrxqxnuqbe7jqfvtwi
dfd8c046c602: Mounted from bafybeidkrwu6dii3aki2qb2m27b57huberunwrpnsrxgxnuqbe7jqfvtwi
4fc242d58285: Mounted from bafybeidkrwu6dii3aki2qb2m27b57huberunwrpnsrxgxnuqbe7jqfvtwi
a3bd9b377696: Pushed
5961f4982fbd: Pushed
21f246e23bd3: Pushed
latest: digest: sha256:095bfb7149587f8fc40bccbed553bc1998715ec23f78f8aba56a59efc34b48c2 size: 2418
bafybeidifuk5aytsp3s55z4e3sqfe5jq7qlh55l5jn436oiby5kd7cnf44: Pulling from 095bfb7149587f8fc40bccbed553k
c1998715ec23f78f8aba56a59efc34b48c2
Digest: sha256:095bfb7149587f8fc40bccbed553bc1998715ec23f78f8aba56a59efc34b48c2
latest: Pulling from 095bfb7149587f8fc40bccbed553bc1998715ec23f78f8aba56a59efc34b48c2
Digest: sha256:095bfb7149587f8fc40bccbed553bc1998715ec23f78f8aba56a59efc34b48c2
Status: Downloaded newer image for disco.forta.network/095bfb7149587f8fc40bccbed553bc1998715ec23f78f8at
a56a59efc34b48c2
disco.forta.network/095bfb7149587f8fc40bccbed553bc1998715ec23f78f8aba56a59efc34b48c🖈 Forta 🔮
```

Deploy Step 6

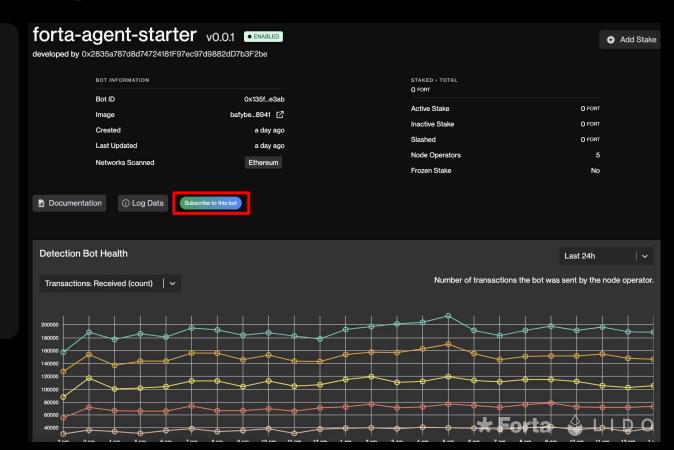
- Deploy using CLI
 - npm run publish
- Need some MATIC



Subscribe Step 7

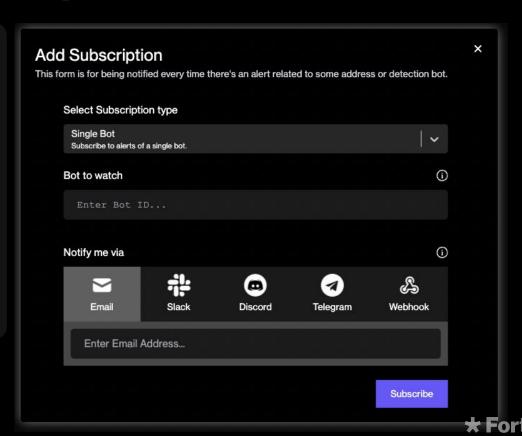
- Various mechanisms:
 - Telegram
 - Email
 - Slack
 - Discord

 - Webhook



Subscribe Step 7

- Various mechanisms:
 - Telegram
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Bot Development Exercises

Exercise 1 **Detect large USDC transfers**

- Simple operational bot alerting on large (10K+) **USDC** transfers
- Filter for Events (ERC20 TRANSFER/ **USDC Token Contract)**
- Normalize value
- Threshold on the value

Exercise 2 **Detect low balances**

- Bot to identify low balances. Allows to monitor your own address
- Assess balance with each block/tx
- Alert when it falls below a threshold
- Cache so you don't receive alert barrage

Exercise 3 Flashloan resulting in losses in **Yearn Dai Vault**

- Assess whether flashloan protocol and Vault were touched in tx
- Assess whether flashloan was obtained
- Assess vault balance before and this block to derive difference
- Threshold on diff and alert



Get started at:

https://github.com/forta-network/forta-bot-workshop





Bot Development Contest



Context 9 Identify attacked protocol

- Win up to 3,000 USD
- Alerts today identify attacks and expose slew of addresses involved in the transaction. Post analysis needs to be performed to identify what protocol was attacked
- Bot's goal is to identify the protocol attacked (e.g. by analyzing token transfers)

https://docs.forta.network/en/latest/contest9-forta/

Part 2.
Let's look at the protocol code

Why we need protocol alerting?

	Generic alerting	Dedicated alerting
Allow detection of generic attacks?	Yep	Kinda
Gives confidence in YOUR protocol safety	50 / 50	> 90%
Main attack vectors detected	Both generic and specific attacks	Generic changes and uncertainties in the protocol, but not attacks itself
Set-up	You can use existing bots	You need to build a bot yourself

We need them **ALL**

Typical protocol alerts Operations

Repetitive events

- Oracle reports
- Rewards distribution
- Funds deposits
- DAO Voting
- **•** ...

Predictions of possible issues in operations

- Sloppy oracles
- Low balance of executors
- Unexpected funds movements
- Unexpected vote content
- **.**.

Typical protocol alerts Security

Inconsistency in protocol invariants

- Bridge balance difference (bridge hack)
- Issuing of the tokens with no actual backup (protocol hack)
- Minting NFTs with no actual backup (protocol hack)
- Unexpected fund transfers (protocol ownership loss)
- **...**

Typical protocol alerts Security

Events that should not happen silently

- Huge withdrawals
- Huge balance changes
- **•** ...

ACL changes

- Role granted/revoked
- Ownership transferred
- **...**

Events that should never happen

- Roles or ownership transfers to the EOA or null address
- Self-distruct of the protocol contract
- Changes in immutable slots values
- **...**



Let's go deeper! Practical examples

When we start?

You should start thinking about alerts and analyzing code before the deployment

ADR

Review contracts architecture for early issues detection

Develop

Add stuff necessary for proper alerting. Events, view methods, etc.

Review

Check that we have all we need for monitoring and alerting

Deploy

Develop and deploy detection bots.
Set-up alerting channels



Defining critical events

ACL changes	Ownership transfers	State changes
Each ACL change should be	To EOA	Ordinary state changes
alerted	To unknown contract	Huge changes in ordinary
Granting or revoking critical	To Null address	state
permissions should be supplied with the critical alerts		Critical state changes

Most common ACL contracts

@openzeppelin/contracts/access/AccessControl.sol
@openzeppelin/contracts/access/Ownable.sol



Defining protocol invariants

Amount minted = Amount deposited

Source bridge balance >= Target bridge balance

Collateral value > Loan value

Defining repetitive events and ways to predict issues with it

Repetitive Event	Possible issues	How to predict
Oracle report	Quorum not reached	Monitor quorum participation and difference in the reports
Rewards distribution	Rewards are not distributed in time	Off chain executor monitoring
Stake deposits	Huge amount of funds in buffer	Off chain executor monitoring
Validator keys upload	New keys are not uploaded	Monitor current available keys number



Code review

based on knows hacks and vulnerabilities

A good way to protect your contracts from being hacked is to investigate known hacks and make sure none of them is applicable for your code.





All alerts should be acted

Otherwise, they shouldn't exist at all

Stay up-to date with the alerts

Set-up on-call system for critical alerts if possible

PagerDuty





Stay up-to date with the alerts

Use separate chats for the info feed and critical alerts



Lido Onchain Alerts

10:58

Lido Mainnet Alerts: [HIGH] Significant Balancer Pool size ...

Critical and High



Lido Onchain Updates

11:08

Lido Mainnet Alerts: [INFO] EasyTrack: New motion create...

All feed



Actions on alerts

RunBooks

RunBook is a comprehensive description of the alert itself and actions to be taken on it.

- Description
- Severity
- Confirmation

- → Resolution
- → Escalation
- → Notes and links



On-call person or person on-duty should know what actions should be done when the alert fires

Check out Lido RunBook



cutt.ly/4BtVNBq

Actions on alerts

Emergency brakes



@openzeppelin/contracts/security/Pausable.sol

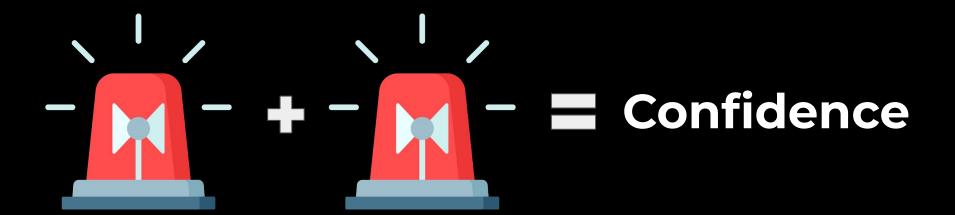
function deposit() external payable whenNotPaused



Your contracts should have "emergency brakes"

Detecting hacks without ability to stop it is useless

One more thing





Alerting for the most critical stuff should be duplicated

It is time to create your own alerts!

Protocol Alerts Exercises

Exercise 1

Operational monitoring and alerts

- Define main operational aspects of the protocol
- Define repetitive events
- Describe events ABI, alert texts and severity
- Think about protocol specific operations that you need to be alerted about

Exercise 2

Security monitoring and alerts

- Define critical events and state changes in the protocol
- Define ACL model
- Determine protocol invariants
- Implement alerts for all points above



Get started at:

https://github.com/forta-network/forta-bot-workshop



Alerting checklist



cutt.ly/TBo7IWy

Existing Lido-Forta bots



github.com/lidofinance/alerting-forta



***** Forta

LIDO

Join Workshop Telegram Group:



https://t.me/+r-DE0dNqvSFjNmNh