

SCRAM authentication

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Authentication methods

- Password
 - Plain text
 - MD5
 - SCRAM-SHA-256
 - RADIUS, ldap, pam, BSD...
- SSL certificates
- Kerberos, SSPI (Windows)
- peer
- <https://www.postgresql.org/docs/current/static/auth-methods.html#AUTH-BSD>

Plain text

- Password sent in clear text

```
Server: Please send your password  
Client: "hoge"  
Server: OK, good to go
```

- Can be used with SSL!
 - sslmode = verify-full
 - sslmode = prefer, the default, is an abomination
- Weak to password sniffing, across network.

MD5

- Password hash sent:

Server: Here is a salt (4 random bytes), please compute

md5(md5(password || username), salt)

Client: “ad22f1df5331cfa7603c67a2092c6159”

Server: OK, good to go

- Can still be used with SSL!
- Issues
 - User rename
 - MD5 is said to be ***bad*** (see community lists).

Attacking MD5 hash

- Guess attack
 - Hash calculation is fast (Millions per second)
- Replay attack
 - Salt is 4 bytes
 - 4-billion possibilities
- Pass-the-hash
 - Connection possible just by knowing the stored hash.
 - Old backups lying around?

Deprecated features in v10

- Removal
 - password_encryption = off/plain is removed
 - Plain text entries in pg_authid
 - createuser --unencrypted
- libpq
 - PQencryptPassword() is deprecated.
 - Use PQencryptPasswordConn().
 - psql's \password uses it and sets password hash to password_encryption.

About SCRAM

- **Salted Challenge Response Authentication Mechanism**
- Implementation of SCRAM-SHA-256
- RFCs
 - 5802: <https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc5802>
 - 7677: <https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc7677>
- New in PostgreSQL 10
- RFC compliant
 - Note that username is sent empty

SCRAM protocol

- Challenge-based exchange

Client: Here is a random nonce (18 bytes)

r=ReZelvordKIQsS5/uybHrLKa

Server: Here is my random nonce, salt and iteration count

r=ReZelvordKIQsS5/uybHrLKaJ4YZ83N/PitA0fx0eEmj1Gro,
s=aqgRYGF+L5LUrYpej98rgA==,
i=4096

Client: Proof that I know the password.

p=O/BAMj7s/fbE5UvMKfhXRmObj/s2hID23sMqUllsXk=

Server: Proof that I also know the password.

v=JyGOhjHVCnLjCbJuC/XTICPPQFQ2fGk8+sCbSq2g+5l=

SCRAM security

- Replay attacks => longer nonces
- Hashed stored in pg_authid cannot be used directly.
- Dictionary attacks
 - Iteration count can be used as parameter
 - Computation of connection proof is costly (cost in connection startup)

SCRAM-SHA-256

- SCRAM originally uses SHA-1.
- SHA-256,384 and 512 functions available in `src/common/sha2*.c`.
- Only uses SHA-256 as hash function.

Verifiers

- Still one verifier per role.
- No dependency on role name (no removal on rename).
- Complicates upgrade scenarios.
- Controlled by password_encryption
 - Default to 'md5'

```
=# SET password_encryption TO 'md5';  
SET  
=# CREATE ROLE role_md5 PASSWORD 'hoge';  
CREATE ROLE  
=# SET password_encryption TO 'scram-sha-256';  
SET  
=# CREATE ROLE role_scram PASSWORD 'hoge';  
CREATE ROLE
```

Format

- Usable with LDAP
- SCRAM-SHA-256\$<iteration count>:
<salt>\$<StoredKey>:<ServerKey>

```
=# SELECT rolname, rolpassword FROM pg_authid  
    WHERE rolname ~ 'role';
```

rolname	rolpassword
role_md5	md5927f6dfffb8b758965daa42fb9a868958
role_scram	SCRAM-SHA-256\$4096:nEYx097qeT9i89Zrkegox w==\$aSEM7ph+TydluWFRXFLSJ9Aqen2qtGw/lkH1rePRYBk=:w2pW4 8qqsaMvPfzWZmUAbeNo0ctBnK2myx35XM7XJLo= (2 rows)

pg_hba.conf

```
# Local connections for Unix domain sockets
# TYPE      DATABASE      USER      ADDRESS      METHOD
local      all            all              trust

# md5 authentication with SSL from dev machines
hostssl    all            all          dev.example.com md5

# SCRAM for the rest, still with SSL
hostssl    all            all          all           scram-sha-256
```

- <https://www.postgresql.org/docs/current/static/auth-pg-hba-conf.html>

Support server-client

- With password, md5 and scram-sha-256...

	hba configuration		
Verifier type	password	md5	scram-sha-256
MD5	O [1]	O	X
SCRAM-SHA-256	O [1]	O [2]	O

[1]: Plain text is used, hash generated server-side.

[2]: SCRAM is used.

Extra work with v10

- Middleware support
 - pgbouncer (patch available on github)
 - pgpool
- Drivers:
https://wiki.postgresql.org/wiki/List_of_drivers
 - ODBC, stuff using libpq => OK
 - JDBC supports protocol

Future improvements

- LDAP extension, storage of SCRAM verifier
- Channel binding
- Iteration count configurable
- Not possible to enforce scram in libpq, rogue servers can force downgrades :(

Upgrade to SCRAM

- Update `pg_hba.conf` (not mandatory)
 - Password, md5 to scram-sha-256
- Client updates, only libpq \geq v10 supports SCRAM
- `password_encryption = 'scram-sha-256'` in `postgresql.conf`.
- Change user passwords.
- Note: still only one password per role :(

SCRAM and encryption

- SCRAM = authentication, **not** encryption.
- Please still use with `sslmode=verify-full` in v10.
- With channel binding, setup gets easier.

About SASL

- **Simple Authentication and Security Layer**
- RFC 4422: <https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc4422>
- “Framework for authentication and data security in Internet protocols. It decouples authentication mechanisms from application protocols, in theory allowing any authentication mechanism supported by SASL to be used in any application protocol that uses SASL.”
- SCRAM is a SASL mechanism.
- Client drivers could use generic SASL and SCRAM implementation as Postgres is RFC-compliant.
- DIGEST-MD5 or others could be added.

Channel binding

- MITM prevention, by “binding” FE/BE
- RFC 5929: <https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc5929>
- Ensure that the point where a connection is done is still the same.
- Channel types:
 - unique: a specific connection is sure to be used.
 - endpoint: the endpoints are the same.

Channel binding for Postgres

- Two channel types
 - `tls-unique`, ensure that using a hash of the TLS end message.
 - `tls-server-end-point`, using a hash of server certificate (useful for JDBC).
- OpenSSL has support (fancy research).
- MacOS, gnuTLS (?) and Windows not directly.
- Connection parameters
 - Channel binding name.
 - Allow client to choose with or without.
- Patch for v11 in review.

Questions?