Stored XSS via Unsanitized Email Field in Admin FAQ Editor

High **thorsten** published **GHSA-98gw-w575-h2ph** 2 days ago

Package

phpMyFAQ

Affected versions

< 4.1.0

Patched versions

4.1.1

Description

Summary

An unauthenticated attacker can submit a guest FAQ with an email address that is syntactically valid per RFC 5321 (quoted local part) yet contains raw HTML — for example "<script>alert(1)</script>"@evil.com. PHP's FILTER_VALIDATE_EMAIL accepts this email as valid. The email is stored in the database without HTML sanitization and later rendered in the admin FAQ editor template using Twig's |raw filter, which bypasses auto-escaping entirely.

Details

1. PHP FILTER_VALIDATE_EMAIL accepts RFC-valid quoted local parts with dangerous characters

phpmyfaq/src/phpMyFAQ/Controller/Frontend/Api/FaqController.php:99
$email = trim((string) Filter::filterVar($data->email, FILTER_VALIDATE_EMAIL));
PHP accepts "<script>alert(1)</script>"@evil.com as a valid email (RFC 5321 allows <, > inside quoted local parts). Confirmed:
"<script>alert(1)</script>"@evil.com => string (valid, not false)

2. Email stored raw without HTML sanitization

phpmyfaq/src/phpMyFAQ/Faq.php — email retrieved directly as $row->email from the database.

3. Admin Twig template renders email with |raw

phpmyfaq/assets/templates/admin/content/faq.editor.twig:296

Affected version: 4.2.0-alpha, commit `f0dc86c`

PoC

The reproduction of the vulnerability was implemented with the help of AI while reviewing the source code to generate the proof-of-concept. Please kindly note this for reference. Since the vulnerability has already been confirmed directly in the source code, the proof-of-concept code may be considered as a reference only.

Please extract the attached compressed file and proceed.
poc.zip

0. (docker compose -f docker-compose.yml down -v)
1. docker compose -f docker-compose.yml up -d mariadb php-fpm nginx
2. bash exploit.sh

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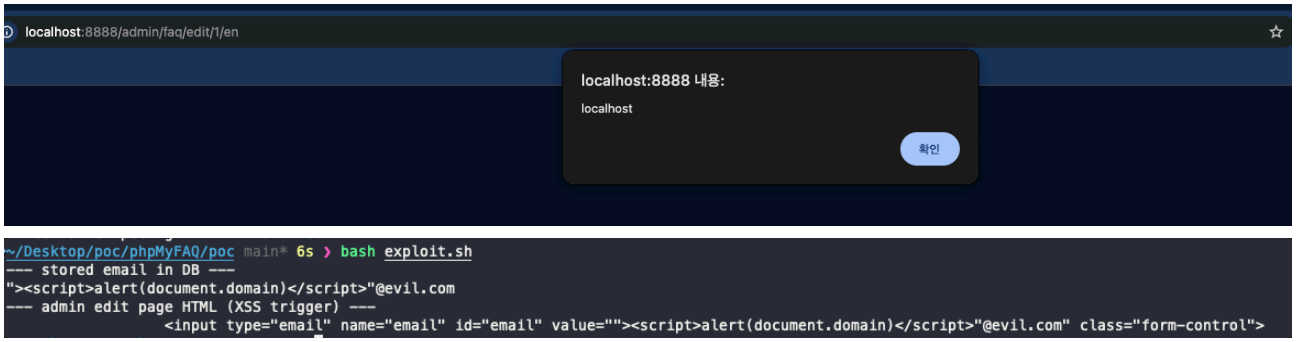
1. Access http://localhost:8888/admin/
2. Log in with admin / Admin1234!
3. After logging in, check whether the URL remains http://localhost:8888/admin/
4. Go to Content → FAQ Administration → edit "poc" → alert popup should appear
   If it does not appear, you can also access it directly via:
   http://localhost:8888/admin/faq/edit/1/en



Impact

When an administrator opens /admin/faq/edit/{id}/{lang} to review the pending FAQ, the injected script executes in the admin's browser context. This allows an attacker to:

- Steal the administrator's session cookie → full admin account takeover
- Perform arbitrary admin actions (create users, modify content, change configuration)
- Pivot to further attacks on the server

The attack chain requires no authentication. By default, records.allowNewFaqsForGuests=true allows unauthenticated FAQ submission, and records.defaultActivation=false guarantees the administrator must visit the edit page to review it.

Note on captcha: The built-in captcha is enabled by default when the PHP gd extension is present (spam.enableCaptchaCode=true). This prevents fully automated exploitation but does not prevent a targeted manual attack — an attacker can solve the captcha once and submit the payload.

Credits

wooseokdotkim

Severity

High

CVE ID

CVE-2026-32629

Weaknesses

- CWE-20
- CWE-79