COM307000 - Software

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Why Software?

- Why is software as important to security as crypto, access control, protocols?
- Virtually all information security features are implemented in software
- If your software is subject to attack, your security can be broken
  - Regardless of strength of crypto, access control, or protocols
- Software is a poor ***foundation*** for security

Software Flaws and Malware

Bad Software is Ubiquitous

- NASA Mars Lander (cost $165 million)
  - Crashed into Mars due to…
  - …error in converting English and metric units of measure
  - Believe it or not
- Denver airport
  - Baggage handling system — very buggy software
  - Delayed airport opening by 11 months
  - Cost of delay exceeded $1 million/day
  - What happened to person responsible for this fiasco?
- MV-22 Osprey
  - Advanced military aircraft
  - Faulty software can be fatal

Software Issues

Alice and Bob

- Find bugs and flaws by accident
- Hate bad software…
- …but they learn to live with it
- Must make bad software work

Trudy

- Actively looks for bugs and flaws
- Likes bad software…
- …and tries to make it misbehave
- Attacks systems via bad software

Complexity

- "Complexity is the enemy of security", Paul Kocher, Cryptography Research, Inc.

System	Lines of Code (LOC)
Netscape	17 million
Space Shuttle	10 million
Linux kernel 2.6.0	5 million
Windows XP	40 million
Mac OS X 10.4	86 million
Boeing 777	7 million

- A new car contains more LOC than was required to land the Apollo astronauts on the moon

Lines of Code and Bugs

- Conservative estimate: 5 bugs/10,000 LOC
- **Do the math**
  - Typical computer: 3k exe's of 100k LOC each
  - Conservative estimate: 50 bugs/exe
  - Implies about 150k bugs per computer
  - So, 30,000-node network has 4.5 billion bugs
  - Maybe only 10% of bugs security-critical and only 10% of those remotely exploitable
  - Then "only" 45 million critical security flaws!

Software Security Topics

- Program flaws (unintentional)
  - Buffer overflow
  - Incomplete mediation
  - Race conditions
- Malicious software (intentional)
  - Viruses
  - Worms
  - Other breeds of malware

Program Flaws

- An **error** is a programming mistake
    - To err is human
- An error may lead to incorrect state: **fault**
    - A fault is internal to the program
- A fault may lead to a **failure**, where a system departs from its expected behavior
    - A failure is externally observable

error → **fault** → **failure**

Example

```
char array[10];
for(i = 0; i < 10; ++i)
    array[i] = `A`;
array[10] = `B`;
```

- This program has an **error**
- This error might cause a **fault**
  - Incorrect internal state
- If a fault occurs, it might lead to a **failure**
  - Program behaves incorrectly (external)
- We use the term **flaw** for all of the above

Secure Software

- In software engineering, try to ensure that a program does what is intended
- ***Secure*** software engineering requires that software **does what is intended…**
- **…and nothing more**
- Absolutely secure software? Dream on…
  - But, absolute security ***anywhere*** is impossible
- How can we manage software risks?

Program Flaws

- Program flaws are **unintentional**
  - But can still create security risks
- We'll consider 3 types of flaws
  - Buffer overflow (smashing the stack)
  - Incomplete mediation
  - Race conditions
- These are the most common flaws

Buffer Overflow

Attack Scenario

- Users enter data into a Web form
- Web form is sent to server
- Server writes data to array called buffer, without checking length of input data
- Data “overflows” buffer
  - Such overflow might enable an attack
  - If so, attack could be carried out by anyone with Internet access

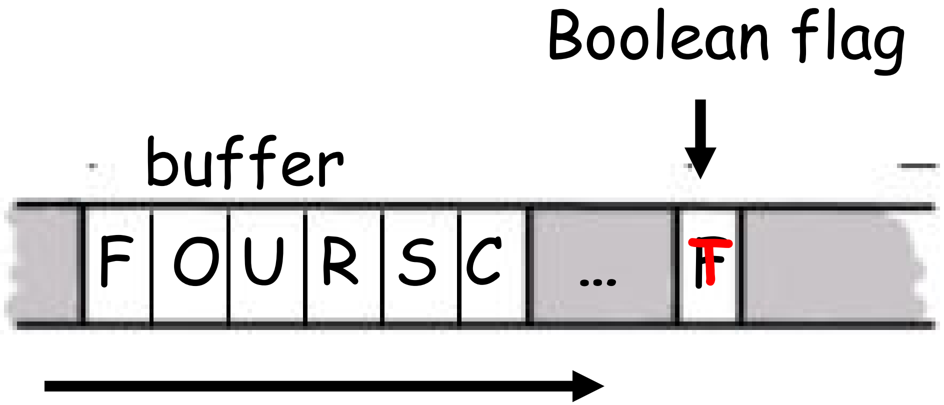
Buffer Overflow

```
int main(){
    int buffer[10];
    buffer[20] = 37;}
```

- **Q:** What happens when code is executed?
- **A:** Depending on what resides in memory at location “buffer[20]”
  - Might overwrite **user** data or code
  - Might overwrite **system** data or code
  - Or program could work just fine

Simple Buffer Overflow

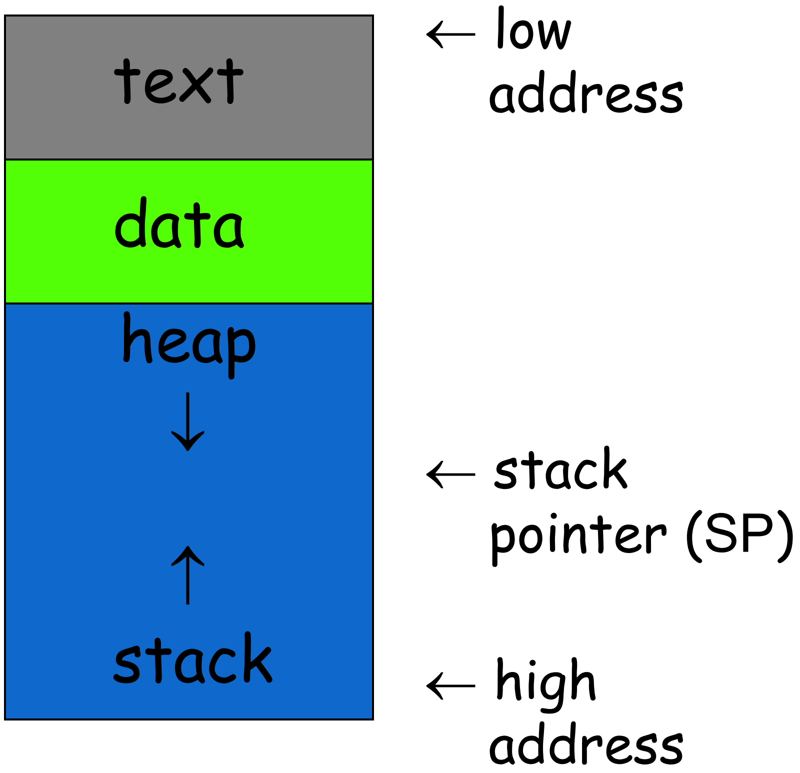
- Consider boolean flag for authentication
- Buffer overflow could overwrite flag allowing anyone to authenticate



- In some cases, Trudy need not be so lucky as in this example

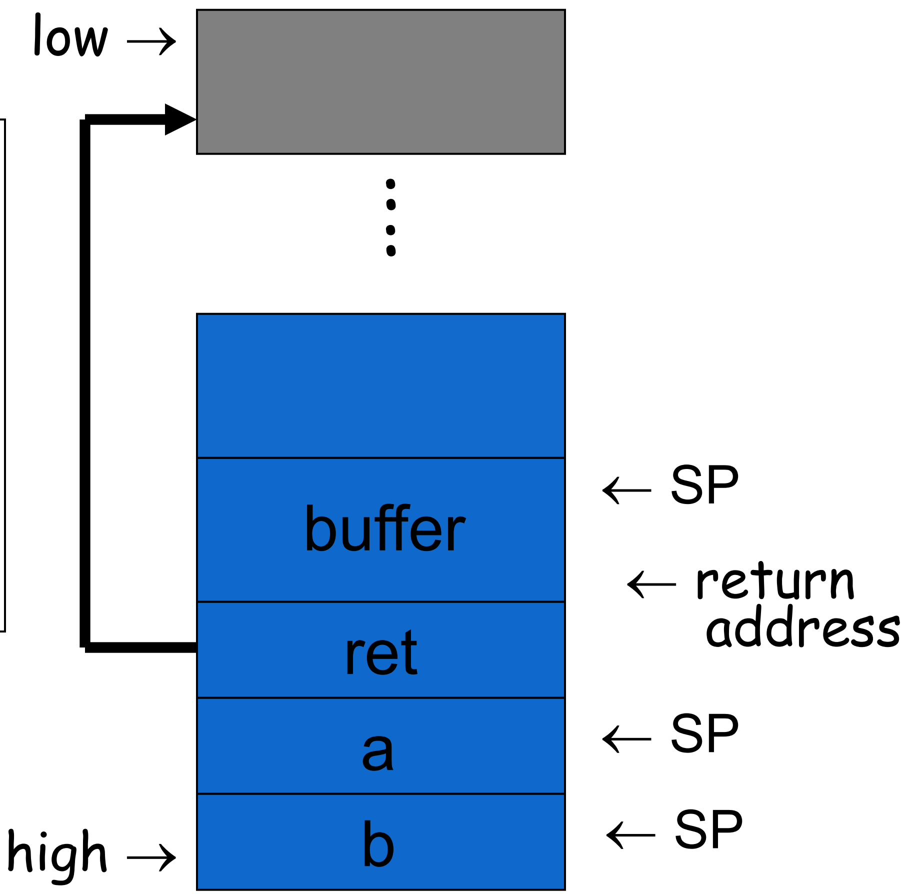
Memory Organization

- **Text** — code
- **Data** — static variables
- **Heap** — dynamic data
- **Stack** — "scratch paper"
  - Dynamic local variables
  - Parameters to functions
  - Return address



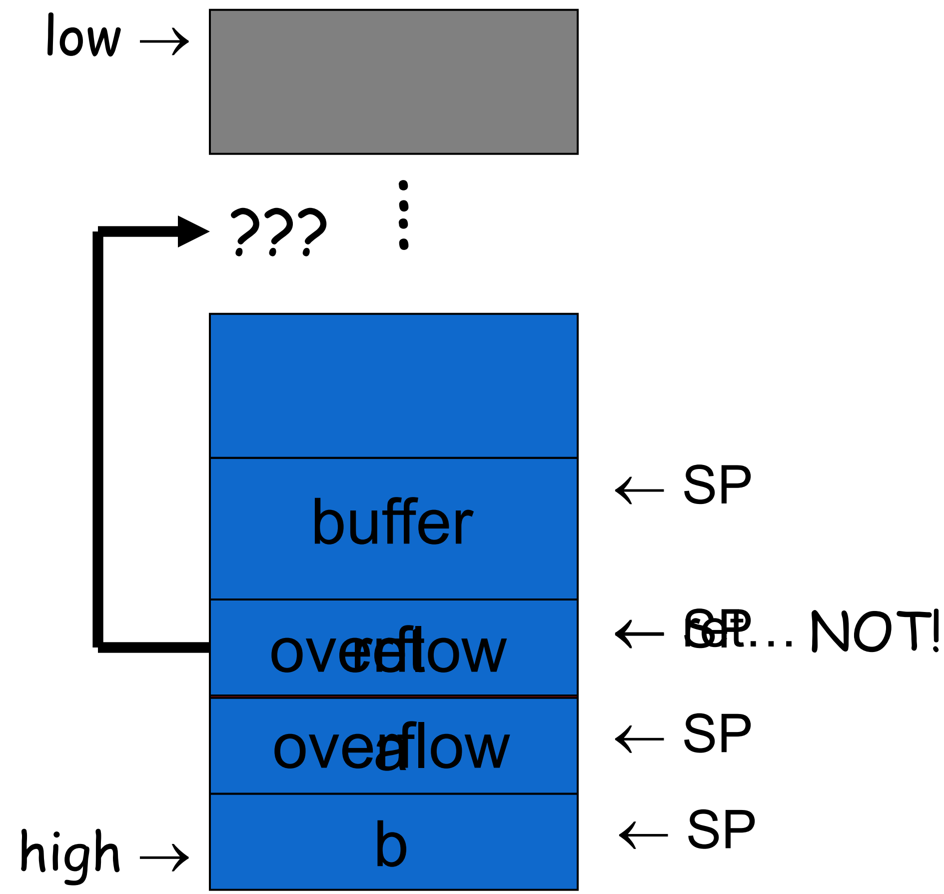
Simplified Stack Example

```
void func(int a, int b){
   char buffer[10];
}
void main(){
   func(1,2);
}
```



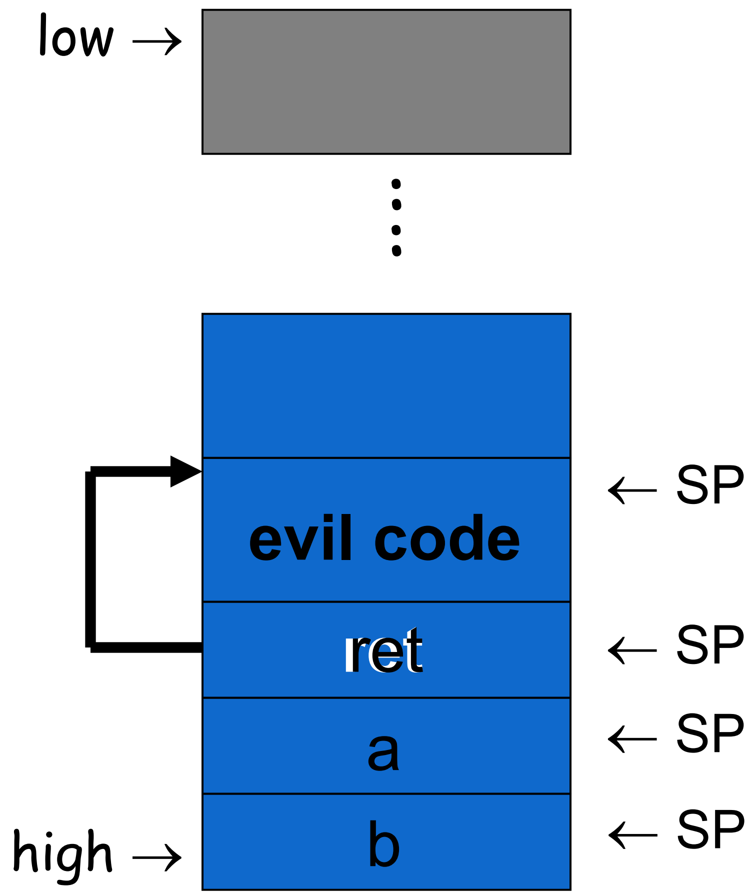
Smashing the Stack

- What happens if buffer overflows?
- Program "returns" to wrong location
- A crash is likely



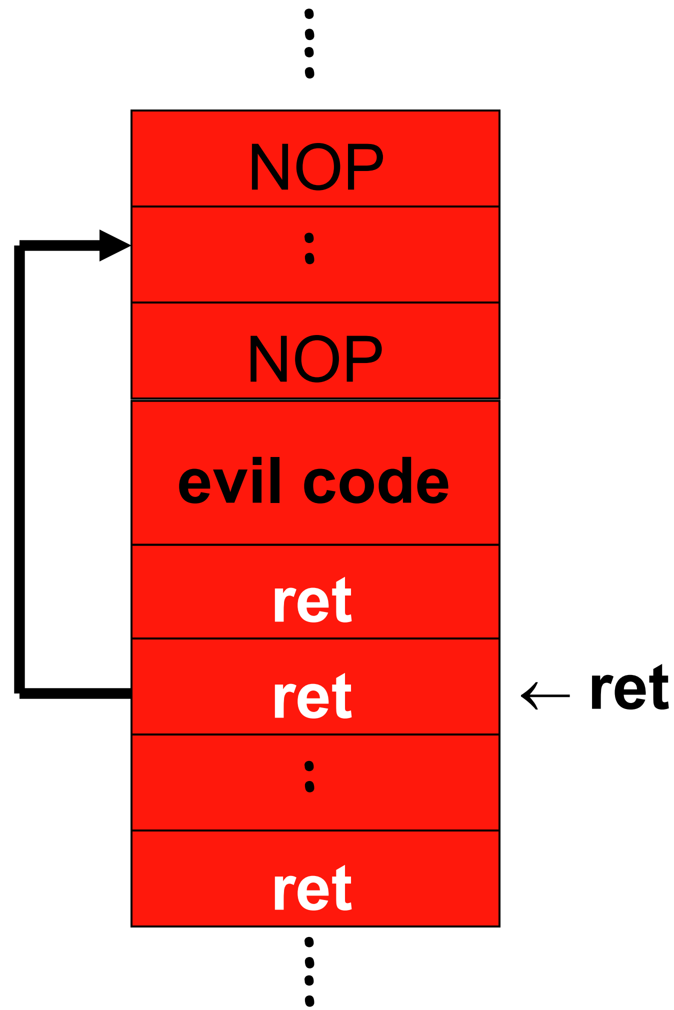
Smashing the Stack

- Trudy has a better idea…
- **Code injection**
- Trudy can run code of her choosing…
  - …on your machine



Smashing the Stack

- Trudy may not know…
  1) Address of evil code
  2) Location of **ret** on stack
- Solutions
  1) Precede evil code with NOP "landing pad"*
  2) Insert **ret** many times



* NOP aka "no-op slide". A landing pad is just a long sequence of nop instructions, so that no matter where eip lands in that string, it will progress to the first "real" instruction.

Stack Smashing Summary

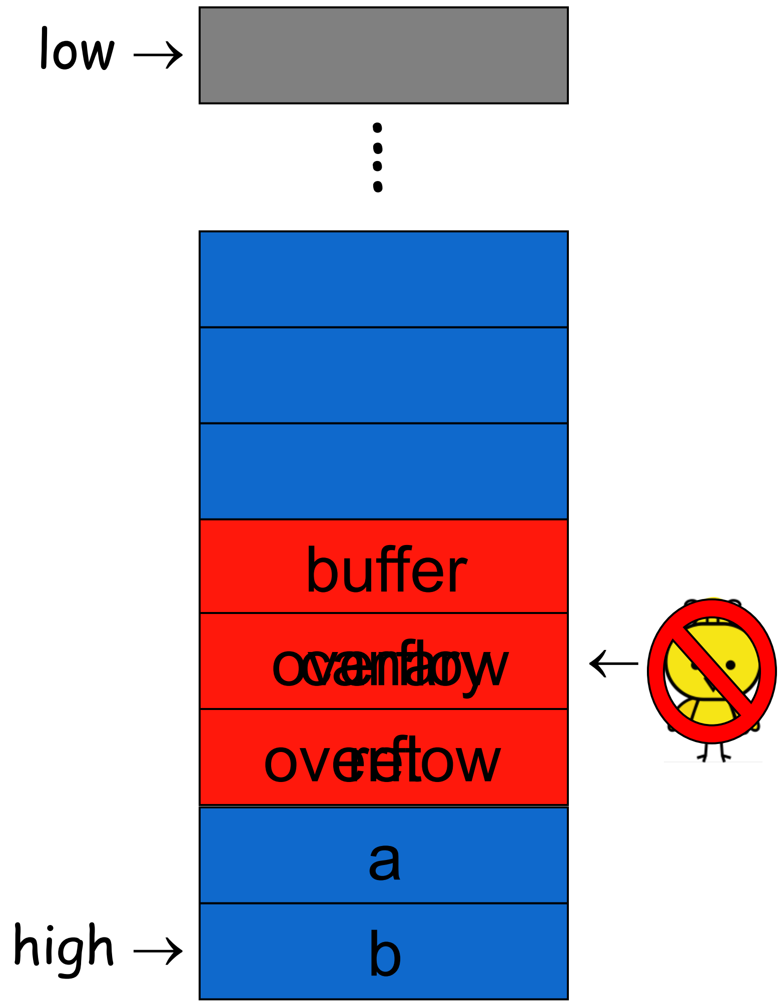
- A buffer overflow must exist in the code
- Not all buffer overflows are exploitable
  - Things must align properly
- If exploitable, attacker can **inject code**
- Trial and error is likely required
  - Fear not, lots of help is available online
  - Smashing the Stack for Fun and Profit, Aleph One
- Stack smashing is “attack of the decade”…
  - …for many recent decades
  - Also heap, integer overflows, format strings, etc.

Stack Smashing Defenses

- Employ **non-executable stack**
  - "No execute" **NX bit** (if available)
  - Seems like the logical thing to do, but some real code executes on the stack (Java, for example)
- Use a **canary**
- Address space layout randomization (**ASLR**)
- Use **safe languages** (Java, C#)
- Use **safer C functions**
  - For unsafe functions, safer versions exist
  - For example, strncpy instead of strcpy

Stack Smashing Defenses

- Canary
  - Run-time stack check
  - Push canary onto stack
  - Canary value:
    - Constant 0x000aff0d
    - Or, may depends on **ret**



Microsoft's Canary

- Microsoft added **buffer security check** feature to C++ with /GS compiler flag
  - Based on canary (or "security cookie")

Q: What to do when canary dies?

A: Check for user-supplied "handler"

- Handler shown to be subject to attack
  - Claimed that attacker can specify handler code
  - If so, formerly "safe" buffer overflows become exploitable when /GS is used!

ASLR

- Address Space Layout Randomization
  - Randomize place where code loaded in memory
- Makes most buffer overflow attacks probabilistic
- Windows Vista uses 256 random layouts
  - So about 1/256 chance buffer overflow works
- Similar thing in Mac OS X and other OSs
- Attacks against Microsoft's ASLR do exist
  - Possible to "de-randomize"

Buffer Overflow

- A major security threat yesterday, today, and tomorrow
- The good news?
  - It <u>is</u> possible to reduce overflow attacks (safe languages, NX bit, ASLR, education, etc.)
- The bad news?
  - Buffer overflows will exist for a long time
  - Why? Legacy code, bad development practices, clever attacks, etc.

Incomplete Mediation

Input Validation

- Consider: strcpy(buffer, argv[1])
- A buffer overflow occurs if

  len(buffer) < len(argv[1])
- Software must **validate** the input by checking the length of argv[1]
- Failure to do so is an example of a more general problem: **incomplete mediation**

Input Validation

- Consider web form data
- Suppose input is validated on client
- For example, the following is valid

  http://www.things.com/orders/final&custID=112&num=55A &qty=20&price=10&shipping=5&total=205

- Suppose input is not checked on server
  - Why bother since input checked on client?
  - Then attacker could send http message

  http://www.things.com/orders/final&custID=112&num=55A &qty=20&price=10&shipping=5&total=25

Incomplete Mediation

- Linux kernel
  - Research revealed many buffer overflows
  - Lots of these due to incomplete mediation
- Linux kernel is "good" software since
  - Open-source
  - Kernel — written by coding gurus
- Tools exist to help find such problems
  - But incomplete mediation errors can be subtle
  - And tools useful for attackers too!

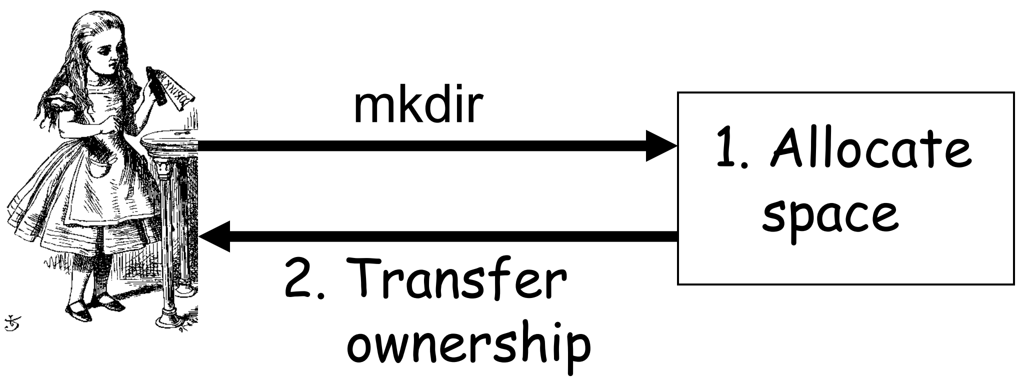
Race Conditions

Race Condition

- Security processes should be **atomic**
  - Occur "all at once"
- Race conditions can arise when security-critical process occurs in stages
- Attacker makes change between stages
  - Often, between stage that gives authorization, but before stage that transfers ownership
- Example: Unix mkdir

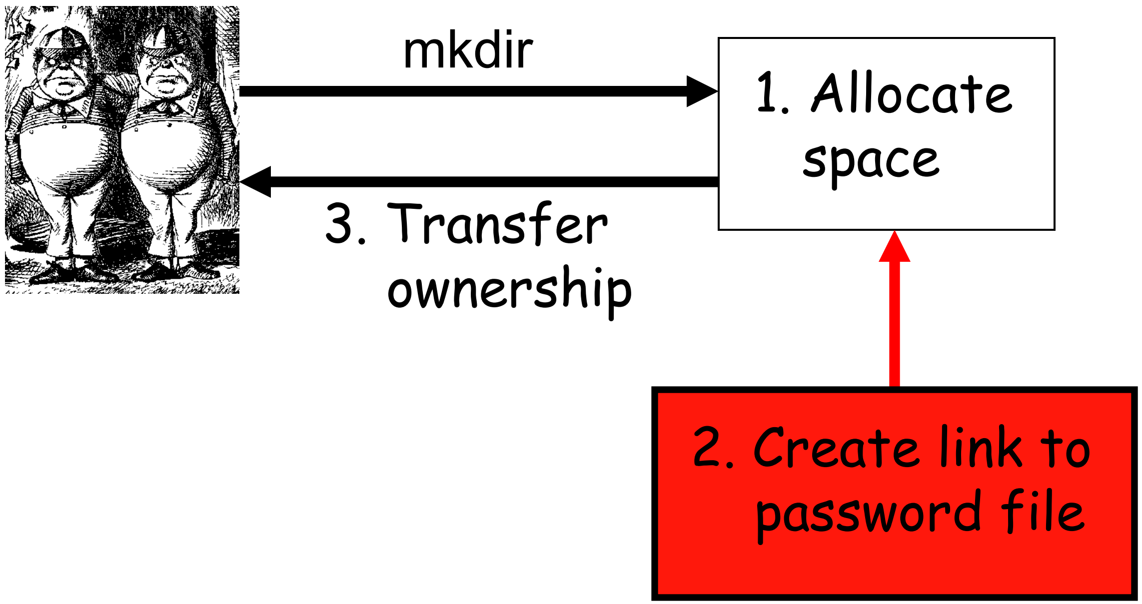
mkdir Race Condition

- mkdir creates new directory
- How mkdir is supposed to work



mkdir Attack

- The mkdir **race condition**



- Not really a "race"
  - But attacker's timing is critical

Race Conditions

- Race conditions are common
- Race conditions may be more prevalent than buffer overflows
- But race conditions harder to exploit
  - Buffer overflow is “low hanging fruit” today
- To prevent race conditions, make security-critical processes atomic
  - Occur all at once, not in stages
  - Not always easy to accomplish in practice

Next…Malware