# Binary Analysis – Emulation and Instrumentation

#### **REVERSE ENGINEERING**

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# **Binary Analysis Process**

- Up to now we know how ELF files are structured, but the question remains: how do we analyse ELF files?
  - Or any other binary executable

- A possible flow can be:
  - File analysis (file, nm, ldd, content visualization, foremost, binwalk)
  - Static Analysis (disassemblers and decompilers
  - Behavioral Analysis (strace, LD\_PRELOAD)
  - Dynamic Analysis (debuggers and emulators)

- Allows capturing the dynamic behavior of some code
  - Behavior that depends on external input
  - Data structures and even code revealed during execution time

- Allows runtime validation/evaluation of binary code
  - A program, a firmware, part of a program, a sequence of instructions
  - Under a controlled context
  - On a different (more flexible, or controllable, or safe) environment

#### How

- Load the binary and execute instructions of the target binary
  - The meaning of "Execute" is broad

- Allow some interaction with the binary while it is running
  - Break the execution at some point
  - Inspect memory and process it's content
  - Change memory, either variables or code
  - Execute code in a controlled manner: step by step, in chunks, until a given point

#### **Approaches**

- Analysis of an execution flow can either be passive or active.
  - Choosing either one or the other has consequences on the soundness, the coverage, etc. of the results
- Passive analysis: observation
  - register values: return value of functions (rax), program counter (pc), stack frame (rbp, rsp), etc.
  - stack inspection: local variables, input parameters (according to some calling conventions), return address, etc.
  - heap inspection: the number of allocated blocks, their content, etc
- Active analysis: modification
  - Easily explore paths without finding inputs that actually activate them

#### caveats

- In android the focus was the simple analysis of java apps, binary applications are more powerful and complex
  - May not be written in java, and have code that runs in a VM
  - May consider code that changes the host system, or is a malware

- Binary analysis of complex applications requires a different toolset
  - The principles will be the same, but the tools will allow fine grained control and isolation
  - Side effects and execution impact may be subtle (remember Meltdown and Spectre)
  - Host systems may be more complex

### (Need for) Stability

- Reversing is significantly more difficult if execution is unstable.
  - Observations are affected by "random" factors, such as multithreaded execution, hardware behavior, user interactions with graphical interface and so on.
  - Applications being reversed should be isolated from external effects are much as possible.

- Determinism in a design results from stable execution of a program run
  - Thus it facilitates debugging and reversing.
  - State may also be deterministically altered for the entire program or for a specific function (fuzzing)
- Logs can be obtained from executions using monitor applications

#### (Need for) Save and Replaying

- Reversing usually needs to trace from the current state to the line of code where a change was produced.
  - It implies moving "back in time".
  - To restore past program state, one must re-run it and try to find failure source.
  - This operation may be performed multiple times, moving backward step-by-step, and then forward.
- Deterministic replay reconstructs program execution using previously recorded input data.
  - The first program run is used to record these inputs into the log.
  - Then all following runs will reconstruct the same behavior, because the program uses only recorded inputs.
  - Should included all inputs (disk, network)

### (Need for) Safety

- Target binary may be malicious (..they are always malicious until proven safe)
- An important aspect of Reversing binaries is malware analysis
  - Malware is way to complex to be analyzed statically
  - But executing the malware may be dangerous
    - Most important: dangerous in ways unknown to the reverse engineer
- Solutions must create the adequate isolation boundaries between environments
  - If stability is required, no interactions with the software under analysis
  - Sometimes, isolation must be broken to trigger specific behavior
    - Network connection allowing contact with a C&C address or to download some payload
    - Disk or file presence
    - Whenever possible, such resource should be virtualized

#### (Need for) Support of Heterogeneous Architectures

- Dynamic analysis requires the execution of the program under analysis.
- A system analyst will mostly run on an Intel x86 64bits computer (a COTS laptop/server)
  - Most embedded devices are ARM, which has several variants
  - Microcontrollers frequently use 8085, AVR or PIC architectures (MIPS)
  - Several specialty SOCs use custom architectures (the list is large...)
  - Several binary formats are popular: ELF, PE, DWARF and then many others from IoT
- Frameworks must be extensible in order to support a wide range of architectures
  - And the related interfaces and customizations
  - While minimizing the need for new tools

#### (Need for) Support of Peripherals and external entities

- Reversing an application with external interactions may require the existence of the related entities
  - Web sites, servers in fixed/dynamic IP addresses
  - Common physical devices for user input, storage, ...
  - Exotic external devices communicating through known or unknown buses
  - Hardware Dongles
- Need to recreate the set of devices/entities required to trigger a specific path
  - Frequently resorts to device emulation with mock software constructs

#### (Need for) Context manipulation (instrumentation)

• The main limitation of a dynamic approach is **coverage**.

 Every path that is not covered by the instrumented executions cannot be analyzed.

 This limitation can be slightly reduced by performing active instrumentation, and in particular by forcing conditional branching

```
Attributes: bp-based frame
     cdecl main(int argc, const char **argv, const char **envp)
main proc near
var 10= dword ptr -10h
var C= dword ptr -0Ch
var 8= qword ptr -8
        rsp, 10h
        [rbp+var C], 14Dh
        rax, [rbp+var 10]
        rdi, unk 555555554814
        [rbp+var C], eax
  lea
          rdi, s
                    stack chk fai
```

#### (Need for) Context manipulation (instrumentation)

- A reversing task will need to observe structure and behavior
  - The analysis should have enough coverage to recover the adequate level of detail
  - But while static analysis aims for wide coverage, dynamic analysis aims for focus
  - What if a specific course of execution is not triggered?
  - Results of dynamic analysis are dependent on the context of the execution

- Context manipulation allows setting the adequate state to trigger a specific flow of execution, increasing the reversing coverage
  - Achieved by careful manipulation of execution state, registers and memory content
  - Problems:
    - May lead to the recovery of an incorrect design as the found flow may be a decoy!
    - May lead to the recovery of artificial vulnerabilities, that do not really exist

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### **Context manipulation (instrumentation)**

 Live patching: modifying RAM in a debugger/controlled environment

File Patching: alter binaries files to replace their content

• Binary Instrumentation: Real time, automated modification

#### **Design Fidelity**

- If the program under analysis is executed, it can detect and try to defend actively against analysis.
  - For instance, it can hide a part of its behavior if it detects that it is being analyzed.
  - This anti-debugging and anti-instrumentation techniques are used by many malwares.
- So, when we achieve a hypothesis of a design, how correct it is?

#### The completely unrelated

In completely unrelated news, upcoming versions of Signal will be periodically fetching files to place in app storage. These files are never used for anything inside Signal and never interact with Signal software or data, but they look nice, and aesthetics are important in software. Files will only be returned for accounts that have been active installs for some time already, and only probabilistically in low percentages based on phone number sharding. We have a few different versions of files that we think are aesthetically pleasing, and will iterate through those slowly over time. There is no other significance to these files.

# **Dynamic Binary Analysis of Binaries**

#### **Processes**

- Tracing
- Debugging
- Sandboxing
- Emulation
- Instrumentation

#### **Tracers**

- ... Already briefly discussed in previous lectures
- Tracers execute a binary, logging information about function and system calls
- Binary is executed in the analyst's system
  - In a VM!
- Tracer adds hooks to application or kernel to gain information about execution
  - Access to files, packets sent, registry access
- No confinement or security measures in place
  - Actually, there may be no interaction between the tracer and the application
    - Tracer monitors system through kernel debug interfaces

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#### **Tracers**

... Already briefly discussed in previous lectures

#### • Limitations:

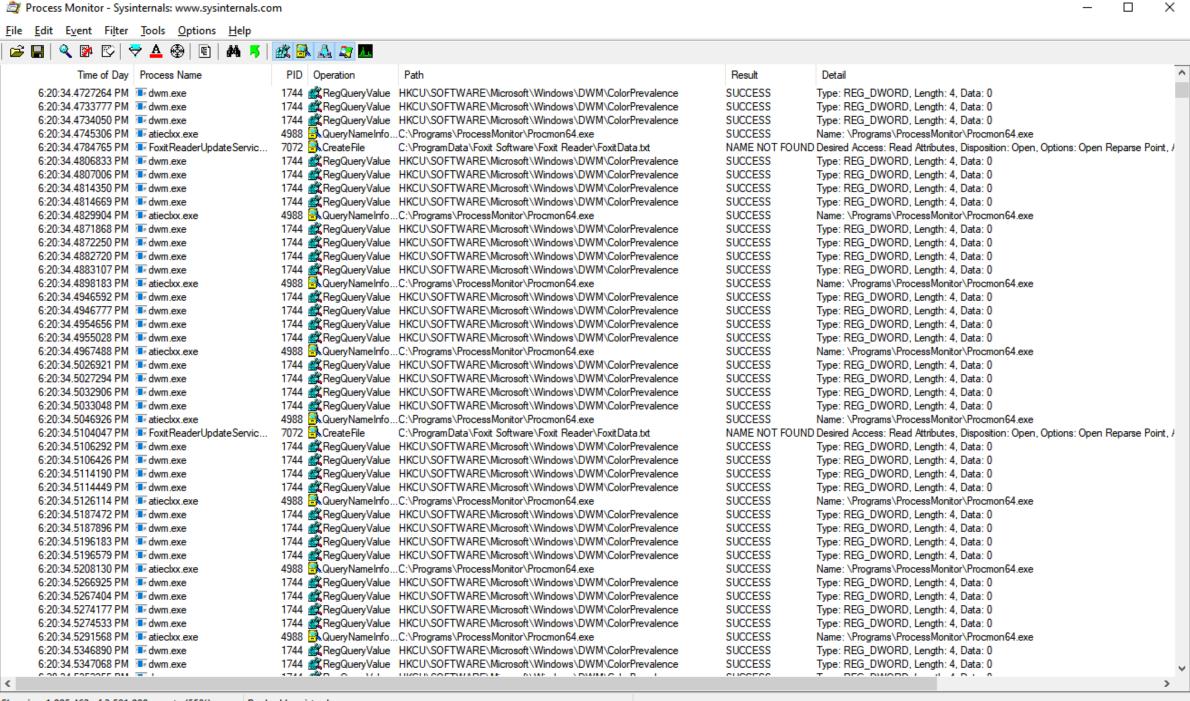
- No isolation, no capability to analyze malicious or harmful code
- Can only inspect interactions between the application and the external environment
- Host environment must be compatible with the target binary
  - No possibility of analyzing windows binaries on linux, vice-versa, embedded systems on windows, etc...

- Linux: ltrace, strace (ptrace), wireshark, valgrind, cachegrind, callgrind, helgrind
- Windows: process monitor, wireshark

```
$ ltrace -CfirS ./hello
                                                                                                                                     = 0x7ffff030a000
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000000 [0x7fb358d197b7] SYS brk(0)
     [pid 3409]
                  0.001059 [0x7fb358d1a417] SYS access("/etc/ld.so.preload", 04)
                                                                                                                                     = -2
     [pid 3409]
                  0.001796 [0x7fb358d1a4fd] SYS openat(0xffffff9c, 0x7fb358d2090f, 0x80000, 0)
                                                                                                                                     = 3
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000924 [0x7fb358d1a383] SYS_fstat(3, 0x7ffff878e030)
                                                                                                                                     = 0
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000634 [0x7fb358d1a6f3] SYS mmap(0, 0xf607, 1, 2)
                                                                                                                                     = 0x7fb358cf0000
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000792 [0x7fb358d1a437] SYS close(3)
                                                                                                                                     = 0
                  0.000497 [0x7fb358d1a4fd] SYS_openat(0xffffff9c, 0x7fb358d29df0, 0x80000, 0)
     [pid 3409]
                                                                                                                                     = 3
                  0.000846 [0x7fb358d1a5c4] SYS_read(3, "\177ELF\002\001\001\003", 832)
     [pid 3409]
                                                                                                                                     = 832
     [pid 3409]
10
                  0.000734 [0x7fb358d1a383] SYS fstat(3, 0x7ffff878e090)
                                                                                                                                     = 0
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000554 [0x7fb358d1a6f3] SYS mmap(0, 8192, 3, 34)
11
                                                                                                                                     = 0x7fb358d30000
12
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000698 [0x7fb358d1a6f3] SYS_mmap(0, 0x1c0800, 1, 2050)
                                                                                                                                     = 0x7fb358b20000
                  0.000751 [0x7fb358d1a7a7] SYS mprotect(0x7fb358b42000, 1658880, 0)
13
     [pid 3409]
                                                                                                                                     = 0
                  0.001054 [0x7fb358d1a6f3] SYS_mmap(0x7fb358b42000, 0x148000, 5, 2066)
14
     [pid 3409]
                                                                                                                                     = 0x7fb358b42000
     [pid 3409]
                  0.001092 [0x7fb358d1a6f3] SYS mmap(0x7fb358c8a000, 0x4c000, 1, 2066)
                                                                                                                                     = 0x7fb358c8a000
15
                  0.000784 [0x7fb358d1a6f3] SYS mmap(0x7fb358cd7000, 0x6000, 3, 2066)
     [pid 3409]
                                                                                                                                     = 0x7fb358cd7000
17
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000857 [0x7fb358d1a6f3] SYS_mmap(0x7fb358cdd000, 0x3800, 3, 50)
                                                                                                                                     = 0x7fb358cdd000
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000765 [0x7fb358d1a437] SYS close(3)
                                                                                                                                     = 0
18
19
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000598 [0x7fb358d01d9c] SYS arch prctl(4098, 0x7fb358d31500, 0x7fb358d31e30, 144)
                                                                                                                                     = 0
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000932 [0x7fb358d1a7a7] SYS mprotect(0x7fb358cd7000, 16384, 1)
20
                                                                                                                                     = 0
21
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000606 [0x7fb358d1a7a7] SYS_mprotect(0x7fb358d3c000, 4096, 1)
                                                                                                                                     = 0
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000599 [0x7fb358d1a7a7] SYS mprotect(0x7fb358d27000, 4096, 1)
22
                                                                                                                                     = 0
                                                                                                Function calls
23
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000595 [0x7fb358d1a787] SYS_munmap(0x7fb358cf0000, 62983)
                                                                                                                                     = 0
     [pid 3409]
                  0.002566 [0x7fb358d3a165] printf("Hello " <unfinished ...>
24
                                                                                                System calls
                  0.000758 [0x7fb358c09af3] SYS fstat(1, 0x7ffff878e670)
25
     [pid 3409]
                                                                                                                                     = 0
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000635 [0x7fb358c0fb58] SYS_ioctl(1, 0x5401, 0x7ffff878e5d0, -3013)
                                                                                                                                     = 0
26
27
     [pid 3409]
                  0.001205 [0x7fb358c10307] SYS brk(0)
                                                                                                                                     = 0x7ffff030a000
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000758 [0x7fb358c10307] SYS brk(0x7ffff032b000)
                                                                                                                                     = 0x7ffff032b000
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000574 [0x7fb358d3a165] <... printf resumed> )
29
                                                                                                                                     = 6
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000436 [0x7fb358d3a171] puts("World" <unfinished ...>
30
                  0.000787 [0x7fb358c0a504] SYS write(1, "Hello World\n", 12Hello World
     [pid 3409]
32
                  0.001037 [0x7fb358d3a171] <... puts resumed> )
     [pid 3409]
                                                                                                                                     = 6
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000496 [0x7fb358be69d6] SYS exit group(0 <no return ...>
     [pid 3409]
                  0.000615 [0xfffffffffffffffff] +++ exited (status 0) +++
```

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- Applications that can control a target executing binary
  - Debuggers can create a process and analyze it or attach to a running process
    - Process usually executes in the host system
  - This is the "typical", low tech way of dynamically analyzing a program
    - Reuses concepts/tools from the engineering process, applied to reverse engineering

- What they provide: extensive, interactive control over a process execution flow
  - Frequently at the level of opcodes and assembly
  - Can be integrated with static analysis tools
    - Combining execution information with decompiled code, CFGs, disassembly

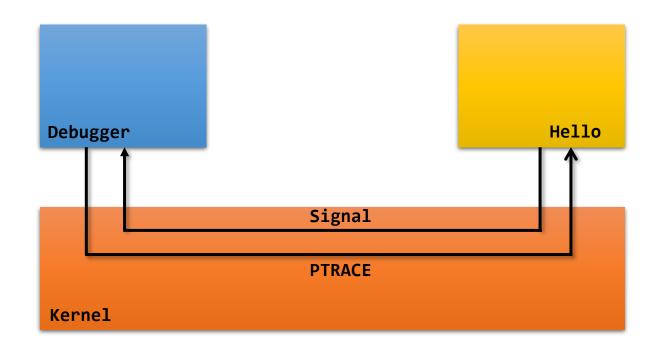
#### **Limitations**

- Debugging can be detected and subverted by the target application
  - Especially popular in malware and DRM systems
- Target application must be executed in a full hosted environment
  - Without isolation measures, this provides a serious security risk
  - Remote debugging may be used to circumvent this limitation
- Host system architecture must match the target binary architecture
  - Binary is loaded to the host system as a standard process
  - No debugging of windows in Linux, ARM or MIPS in x86
  - No direct way of debugging shellcode or a binary blob (e.g firmware).

#### How debuggers work?

- Debuggers explore system calls provided by the operating system
  - Debuggers either:
    - create a child process, sharing the same address space
    - attach to an existing process given that the user has the correct permissions (e.g. root)
  - Linux: ptrace
  - Windows: provides API for process control
    - CreateProcess with specific dwCreationFlags (DEBUG\_PROCESS)
    - OpenProcess with dwDesiredAccess (PROCESS\_VM\_READ, PROCESS\_VM\_WRITE, PROCESS\_VM\_OPERATION)
- Debuggers may attach to hardware devices providing external debugging
  - Used in embedded devices

Debugger set breakpoints which Trigger SIGTRAP, returning control to the debugger.



Patching the code with **0xCC** or using Hardware breakpoints (through **PTRACE**)

# Debugging debugger.c

```
void run target(const char* programname)
     int main(int argc, char** argv)
                                                                                 procmsg("target started. will run '%s'\n", programname);
 82
         pid t child pid;
 83
                                                                        37
         if (argc < 2) {
                                                                                 if (ptrace(PTRACE TRACEME, 0, 0, 0) < 0) {
 85
             fprintf(stderr, "Expected a program name as argument\n");
                                                                                     perror("ptrace");
             return -1;
                                                                                     return;
 87
                                                                        41
         child pid = fork();
                                                                        42
         if (child pid == 0)
                                                                        43
 90
                                                                                 execl(programname, programname, 0);
             run_target(argv[1]);
                                                                        44
 91
 92
         else if (child pid > 0)
 94
             run_debugger(child_pid);
         else {
                                fork() duplicates the current process. While
             perror("fork");
                                sharing the same address space.
             return -1;
100
101
                                One (child) will execute run target()
102
         return 0;
103
                                Other (parent) will execute run_debugger()
```

# Debugging debugger.c

Child process allows tracing

```
void run target(const char* programname)
     int main(int argc, char** argv)
                                                                           33
         pid t child pid;
                                                                                    procmsg("target started. will run '%s'\n", programname);
 82
 83
         if (argc < 2) {
                                                                           37
                                                                                    if (ptrace(PTRACE TRACEME, 0, 0, 0) < 0) {</pre>
 85
              fprintf(stderr, "Expected a program name as argument\n");
                                                                                        perror("ptrace");
              return -1;
                                                                                        return;
 87
                                                                           41
         child pid = fork();
                                                                           42
                                                                                    /* Replace this process's image with the given program */
         if (child pid == 0)
                                                                           43
 90
                                                                                    execl(programname, programname, 0);
             run_target(argv[1]);
                                                                           44
 91
 92
         else if (child pid > 0)
 94
             run_debugger(child_pid);
         else {
                                                      exec1 will replace the current process image with
             perror("fork");
             return -1;
                                                      the binary loaded from the storage.
100
101
```

In this moment, the processes become different.

return 0;

102

103

# Debugging debugger.c

Wait for process to start

**Get CPU registers** 

Single Step through one instruction (ASM)

Wait for instruction to finish

```
void run debugger(pid t child pid)
49 ▼ {
         int wait status;
         unsigned icounter = 0;
         procmsg("debugger started\n");
52
         struct user regs struct regs;
54
         wait(&wait status);
57
58 ▼
         while (WIFSTOPPED(wait status)) {
             icounter++;
             ptrace(PTRACE GETREGS, child pid, 0, &regs);
             unsigned instr = ptrace(PTRACE PEEKTEXT, child pid, regs.rip, 0);
62
             procmsg("icounter = %u. RIP = 0x%08x. instr = 0x%08x\n",
63
                         icounter, regs. rip, instr);
64
             /* Make the child execute another instruction */
             if (ptrace(PTRACE SINGLESTEP, child pid, 0, 0) < 0) {</pre>
67 ▼
                 perror("ptrace");
69
                 return;
70
71
72
73
             wait(&wait status);
75
76
         procmsg("the child executed %u instructions\n", icounter);
77
```

# Sandboxing

- Sandboxing improves the control that debuggers provide
  - Creation of a distinct execution environment
    - Different libraries? Restricted view of the filesystem (minimal access to files)
  - Isolate some actions, providing some safety to analyze malicious applications
- Implementation: lightweight virtual machines or namespaces/containers
  - Supported my mechanisms of the Operating System or additional tools
  - Tools: sandboxie, pyrebox, panda
- An agent monitors interactions of the application inside the environment and may allow instrumentation
  - File access, network communication
  - Remote debugging

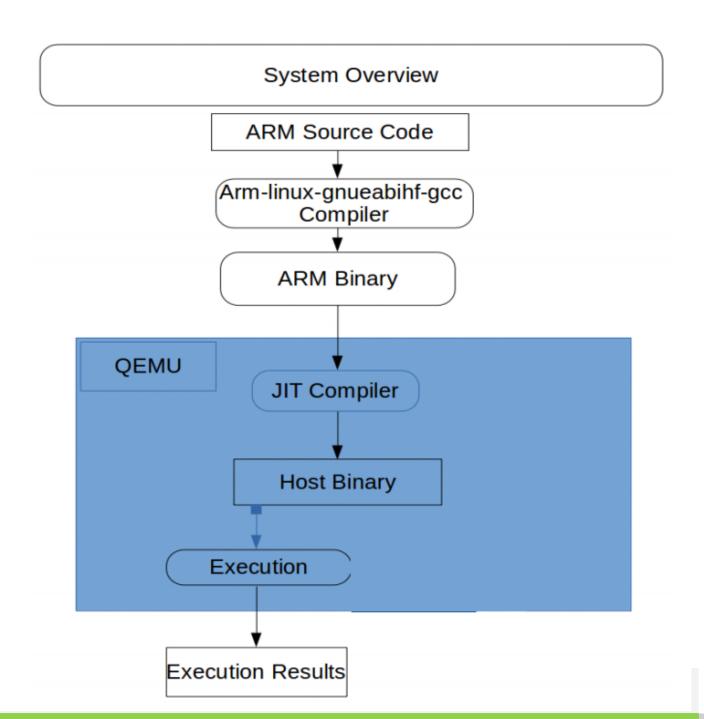
- Emulators are the typical backends for sandboxes
  - May provide much better isolation as the guest and host environments are distinct
    - Kernel is not shared, hardware is emulated
  - Tools: <u>QEMU</u>, Virtualbox, Vmware
- Emulation types
  - Full system emulation
  - User mode emulation

#### **User Mode Emulation**

- Launches a processes directly, but on a restricted environment
  - Process may be compiled for one CPU and executed on another CPU
  - Address space is restricted, such as filesystem and libraries available
  - Interaction with Host OS is mediated by the emulator
- Emulator process native CPU instructions (emulation/translation) and:
  - Provide means to translate syscalls from guest to host OS
  - Understand intrinsic characteristics such as clone
    - Clone is used to spawn new processes and will require the creation of a new emulation environment
  - Handle signals between analyzed binary and the host system
- May provide integration with debugging tools

#### **User Mode Emulation with QEMU**

- QEMU allows user mode emulation as long as the OS is kept the same
- What it does:
  - Machine code translation from any CPU to any CPU
  - Syscall mapping
  - Data structure conversion (Bit-order and Bit-width conversions)
  - Extensive tracing capability to the level of Micro Ops
- Provides a **gdbserver** interface for interaction with GDB
- Usefulness: reverse engineering applications compiled to other architectures



#### **Full System Emulation**

- Basically: a full-blown virtual machine
  - Emulates a highly configurable set of hardware, including embedded devices
  - Maps interactions to Host resources (screen, disk, network)
  - RE aware software tools expose debugging interfaces (usually to gdb)
- Provides the best level of isolation
  - All accesses are mediated by the emulator, reducing the attack surface to emulator components
  - Allows analyzing other binaries besides standard executable files
    - Firmware, MBR, UEFI
- Malware frequently try to detect Virtual Machines, emulators and debuggers...
  - With variable sofistication

# Remote debugging with emulators

#### gdb and gdbserver

- **gdb** can debug remote applications
  - It can even debug remote kernels and firmware
  - Why? Consider embedded devices, software inside an emulator
- **gdbserver** is launched on the target system, with the arguments:
  - Either a device name (to use a serial line) or a TCP hostname and portnumber, and the path and filename of the executable to be debugged
  - It then waits passively for the host **gdb** to communicate with it.
- **gdb** is run on the host, with the arguments:
  - The path and filename of the executable (and any sources) on the host, and
  - A device name (for a serial line) or the IP address and port number needed for connection to the target system.
- Alternative: the remote application is compiled with a stub that provides a gdbserver interface when the
  application is launched

## Example

#### Reversing an ARM binary

```
(root@pc)-[/tmp/er/arm]
                                                                      —(user⊕pc)-[/tmp/er/arm]
                                                                      $ gdb-multiarch ./crackme-dyn-arm
-# qemu-arm -L . -singlestep -g 1234 crackme-dyn-arm
                                                                     GNU gdb (Debian 10.1-1.7) 10.1.90.20210103-git
                                                                     Copyright (C) 2021 Free Software Foundation, Inc.
                                                                     License GPLv3+: GNU GPL version 3 or later <a href="http://gnu.org/lic">http://gnu.org/lic</a>
                                                                     enses/gpl.html>
                                                                     This is free software: you are free to change and redistribute
                                                                     There is NO WARRANTY, to the extent permitted by law.
                                                                     Type "show copying" and "show warranty" for details.
                                                                     This GDB was configured as "x86_64-linux-gnu".
                                                                     Type "show configuration" for configuration details.
                                                                     For bug reporting instructions, please see:
                                                                     <a href="https://www.gnu.org/software/gdb/bugs/">https://www.gnu.org/software/gdb/bugs/>.</a>
                                                                     Find the GDB manual and other documentation resources online a
                                                                         <http://www.gnu.org/software/gdb/documentation/>.
                                                                     For help, type "help".
                                                                     Type "apropos word" to search for commands related to "word" ..
                                                                     Reading symbols from ./crackme-dyn-arm ...
                                                                     (No debugging symbols found in ./crackme-dyn-arm)
                                                                     (gdb) target remote localhost:1234
                                                                     Remote debugging using localhost:1234
                                                                     warning: remote target does not support file transfer, attempt
                                                                     ing to access files from local filesystem.
                                                                     Reading symbols from /tmp/er/arm/lib/ld-linux-armhf.so.3...
                                                                     (No debugging symbols found in /tmp/er/arm/lib/ld-linux-armhf.
                                                                     0×3ffcea30 in ?? () from /tmp/er/arm/lib/ld-linux-armhf.so.3
                                                                     (gdb) br main
                                                                     Breakpoint 1 at 0×10574
                                                                     (gdb)
```

### **Exercise**

#### unknown.bin

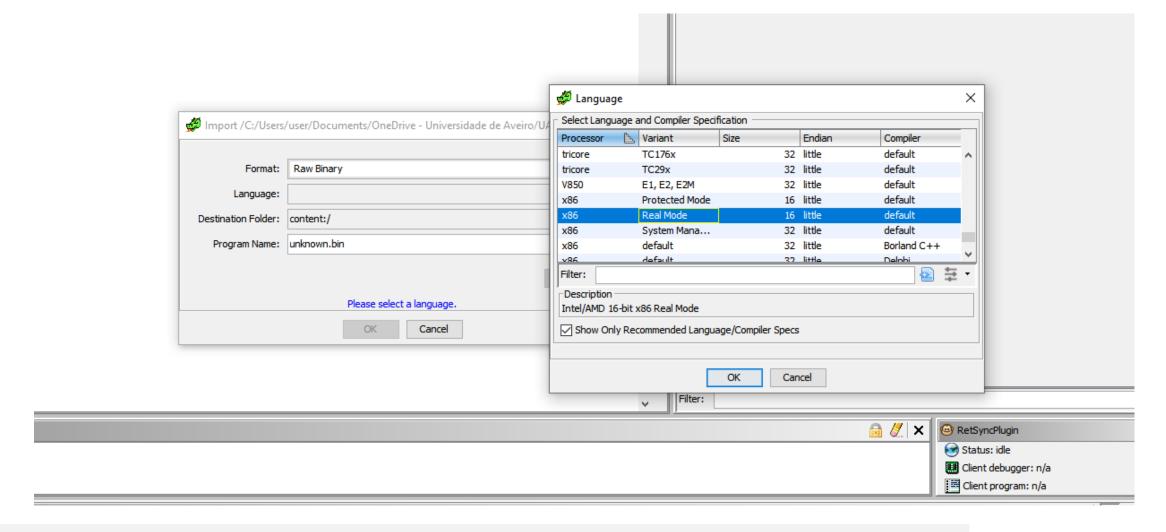
- Remember the unknown.bin file?
  - Well... looks like a PDF (is a PDF)
  - but \$ file unknown.bin returns "unknown.bin: DOS/MBR boot sector"

- What we may extrapolate from that:
  - Seems to be a DOS/Master Boot Record (<u>Master boot record Wikipedia</u>)
  - DOS was only released for i386 (16bits and 32bits)
  - qemu-system-i386 may boot it if used as a hard disk or floppy disk

#### unknown.bin

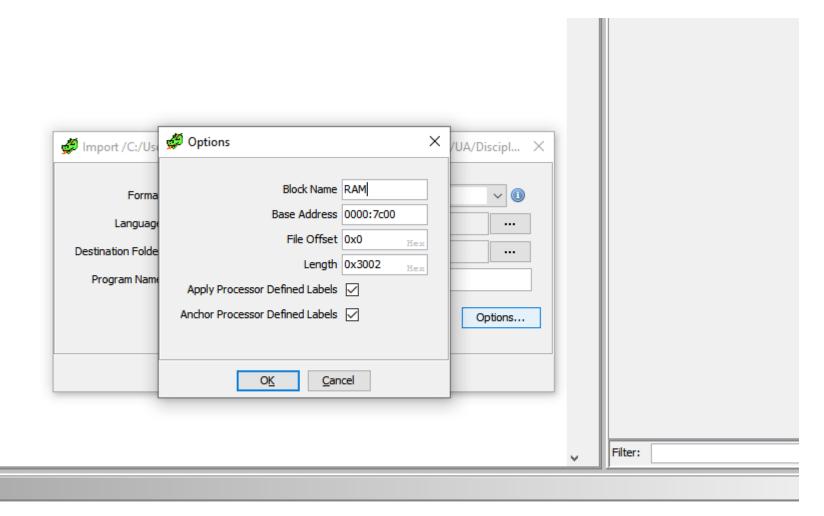
- How to address such files?
  - Binary files other than ELFs (or PE or other similar) obey to a fixed set of rules
  - It is required to check the datasheets and gather information required to load the file.
  - Important:
    - CPU used, CPU mode, relevant or required peripherals: to know how to decode the binary instructions
    - Program Entry Point: to know where the program starts, and where disassembly should start
- From a Master Boot Record we may know:
  - MBR is loaded to address 0x7C00
  - MBR code runs in Intel x86 Real Mode (16bits)
  - There are quite a few limitations and assumptions: <a href="mailto:IBM DOS 2.00 Master Boot Record">IBM DOS 2.00 Master Boot Record (pcministry.com)</a>
  - There is no OS running. Input/Output must use BIOS Interrupts

## Loading the unknown.bin in ghidra



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## Loading the unknown.bin in ghidra



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## Loading the unknown.bin in ghidra

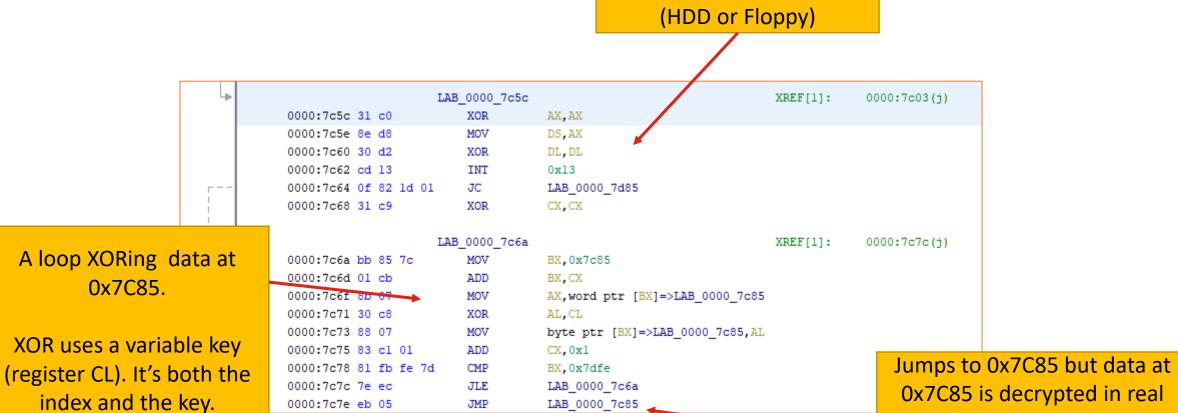
	//	
	// RAM	
	// ram:0000	:7c00-ram:0000:ac01
	//	
assume DF = 0x0	(Default)	
0000:7c00 25	??	25h %
0000:7c01 ff	??	FFh
0000:7c02 ff	??	FFh
0000:7c03 eb	??	EBh
0000:7c04 57	??	57h W
0000:7c05 0a	??	0Ah
0000:7c06 00	??	00h
0000:7c07 00	??	00h
0000:7c08 00	??	00h
0000:7c09 00	??	00h
0000:7c0a 00	22	00h
0000:7c0b 00	22	00h
0000:7c0c 00	??	00h
0000:7c0d 00	22	00h
0000:7c0e 00	??	00h
0000:7c0f 00	??	00h
0000:7c10 00	22	00h
0000:7cll 00	22	00h
0000:7c12 00	22	00h
0000:7c13 00	22	00h
0000:7c14 00	??	00h
0000:7c15 00	??	00h
0000:7c16 00	??	00h
0000:7c17 00	??	00h
0000:7c18 00	??	00h

# If we state that 0x7C00 has code, looks like we have something

	//		
	// RAM		
		):7c00-ram:0000:ac01	
	// (D=5==1=)		
assume DF = 0x0			
0000:7c00 25 ff ff		AX, 0xffff	
0000:7c03 eb 57	JMP	LAB_0000_7c5c	
0000:7c05 0a	??	0Ah	
0000:7c06 00	??	00h	
0000:7c07 00	??	00h	
0000:7c08 00	??	00h	
0000:7c09 00	??	00h	
0000:7c0a 00	??	00h	
0000:7c0b 00	??	00h	
0000:7c0c 00	??	00h	
0000:7c0d 00	??	00h	
0000:7c0e 00	??	00h	
0000:7c0f 00	??	00h	
0000:7c10 00	??	00h	
0000:7cll 00	??	00h	
0000:7c12 00	??	00h	
0000:7c13 00	??	00h	
0000:7c14 00	??	00h	
0000:7c15 00	??	00h	
0000:7c16 00	??	00h	
0000:7c17 00	??	00h	
0000:7c18 00	??	00h	
0000:7c19 00	??	00h	
0000:7cla 00	??	00h	
0000:7clb 00	??	00h	
		DEVEDSE ENGINEED	↲.

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#### Loading the unknown.bin in ghidra



Some check to int 13H

for i in range(0x7dfe - 0x7c85):  $ram[0x7c85 + i] ^= i$ 

0x7C85 is decrypted in real time. Static analysis cannot see it... 🖂

Must use dynamic analysis ©

A loop XORing data at

0x7C85.

XOR uses a variable key

index and the key.

## Loading the unknown.bin in qemu with gdb

Execute GDB
Connect to the gdbserver
Do some initialization to set the CPU
and display layout

```
root@pc)-[/tmp/mbr]
                                                                                         # gdb -ix gdb init real mode.txt \
          (root® pc)-[/tmp/mbr]
                                                                                           -ex 'target remote localhost:1234'
         -# gemu-system-i386 -m 1M -fda <u>unknown.bin</u> -s -S -monitor telnet:127.0.0.1:2222,ser
       ver, nowait:
       WARNING: Image format was not specified for 'unknown.bin' and probing guessed raw.

Automatically detecting the format is dangerous for raw images, write operat
                                                                                        GNU gdb (Debian 10.1-1.7) 10.1.90.20210103-git
                                                                                        Copyright (C) 2021 Free Software Foundation, Inc.
  Launch gemu-system-i386 with a
                                                            restrictions.
                                                                                        License GPLv3+: GNU GPL version 3 or later <a href="http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html">http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html</a>
                                                                                        This is free software: you are free to change and redistribute it.
gdbserver socket and monitor socket
                                                                                        There is NO WARRANTY, to the extent permitted by law.
                                                                                        Type "show copying" and "show warranty" for details.
                                                                                        This GDB was configured as "x86 64-linux-gnu".
                                                                                        Type "show configuration" for configuration details.
                                                                                        For bug reporting instructions, please see:
                                                                                        <a href="https://www.gnu.org/software/gdb/bugs/">https://www.gnu.org/software/gdb/bugs/>.</a>
                                                                                        Find the GDB manual and other documentation resources online at:
                                                                                           <http://www.gnu.org/software/gdb/documentation/>.
                                     QEMU [Paused]
                                                                                        For help, type "help".
      Machine View
                                                                                        Type "apropos word" to search for commands related to "word".
     SeaBIOS (version 1.14.0-2)
                                                                                        warning: A handler for the OS ABI "GNU/Linux" is not built into this configuration
                                                                                        of GDB. Attempting to continue with the default i8086 settings.
      iPXE (http://ipxe.org) 00:03.0 CA00 PCI2.10 PnP PMM+00000000+00000000 CA00
                                                                                        The target architecture is set to "i8086".
                                                                                        warning: A handler for the OS ABI "GNU/Linux" is not built into this configuration
     Booting from Hard Disk...
                                                                                        of GDB. Attempting to continue with the default i8086 settings.
     Boot failed: could not read the boot disk
                                                                                        Remote debugging using localhost:1234
     Booting from Floppy...
                                                                                        warning: No executable has been specified and target does not support
                                                                                        determining executable automatically. Try using the "file" command.
                                                                                                               -[ STACK 1---
                                                                                        0000 2000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000
                                                                                                               -- DS:SI ]---
                                                                                        -[ ES:DI ]---
```

It runs and we have control in GDB

#### Loading the unknown.bin in qemu with gdb

#### Approach:

- Set a breakpoint to 0x7c85
  - Continue (let it decrypt)

```
BYTE PTR [bx+si],al
     (root@pc)-[/tmp/mbr]
   -# gemu-system-i386 -m 1M -fda <u>unknown.bin</u> -s -S -monitor telnet:127.0.0.1:2222,ser
                                                                                          Breakpoint 1, 0×00007c00 in ?? ()
                                                                                                       br *0×7c85
  ver, nowait;
  WARNING: Image format was not specified for 'unknown.bin' and probing guessed raw.
                                                                                          Breakpoint 2 at 0×7c85
           Automatically detecting the format is dangerous for raw images, write operat
  ions on block 0 will be restricted.
                                                                                          Continuing.
          Specify the 'raw' format explicitly to remove the restrictions.
                                                                                                                    -- STACK 1---
                                                                                          D006 F000 0000 0000 6F5E 0000 81EA 0000
                                                                                          822B 0000 0000 0000 0000 0000 81EA 0000
                                                                                                   _____[ DS:SI ]---
                                                                                          00000000: 53 FF 00 F0 53 FF 00 F0 C3 E2 00 F0 53 FF 00 F0 S...S.....S...
                                                                                          00000010: 53 FF 00 F0 54 FF 00 F0 53 FF 00 F0 53 FF 00 F0 S...T...S...S...
                                                                                          00000020: A5 FE 00 F0 87 E9 00 F0 34 D4 00 F0 34 D4 00 F0 ......4...4...
                                                                                          00000030: 34 D4 00 F0 34 D4 00 F0 57 EF 00 F0 34 D4 00 F0 4 ... 4 ... W ... 4 ...
                                                                                                                  ---[ ES:DI ]---
                                                                                          00000000: 53 FF 00 F0 53 FF 00 F0 C3 E2 00 F0 53 FF 00 F0 S...S.....S...
                                   QEMU [Paused]
                                                                                          00000010: 53 FF 00 F0 54 FF 00 F0 53 FF 00 F0 53 FF 00 F0 S...T...S...
                                                                                          00000020: A5 FE 00 F0 87 E9 00 F0 34 D4 00 F0 34 D4 00 F0 ......4...4...
 Machine View
                                                                                          00000030: 34 D4 00 F0 34 D4 00 F0 57 EF 00 F0 34 D4 00 F0 4 ... 4 ... W ... 4 ...
SeaBIOS (version 1.14.0-2)
                                                                                          AX: 00D0 BX: 7DFF CX: 017B DX: 0000
                                                                                          SI: 0000 DI: 0000 SP: 6F00 BP: 0000
iPXE (http://ipxe.org) 00:03.0 CA00 PCI2.10 PnP PMM+00000000+00000000 CA00
                                                                                          CS: 0000 DS: 0000 ES: 0000 SS: 0000
                                                                                          IP: 7C85 EIP:00007C85
                                                                                          CS:IP: 0000:7C85 (0×07C85)
Booting from Hard Disk...
                                                                                          SS:SP: 0000:6F00 (0×06F00)
Boot failed: could not read the boot disk
                                                                                          SS:BP: 0000:0000 (0×00000)
                                                                                          OF <0> DF <0> IF <1> TF <0> SF <0> ZF <0> AF <0> PF <0> CF <0>
Booting from Floppy...
                                                                                          ID <0> VIP <0> VIF <0> AC <0> VM <0> RF <0> NT <0> IOPL <0>
                                                                                                                  —[ CODE ]—
                                                                                          ⇒ 0×7c85:
                                                                                                         mov
                                                                                                                ax,0×7e0
                                                                                                         mov
                                                                                                                es,ax
                                                                                                                bx.bx
                                                                                                                ax,0×217
                                                                                                         mov
                                                                                                                ch,0×0
                                                                                                                cl,0×2
                                                                                                         mov
                                                                                                                dh,0×0
                                                                                                                dl.0×0
                                                                                                          mov
                                                                                                                0×13
                                                                                          Breakpoint 2, 0×00007c85 in ?? ()
```

#### Loading the unknown.bin in qemu with gdb

Connect to the QEMU Control socket

Dump physical RAM (1MB)

This file can be loaded in ghidra and should contain
the decrypted code! ©

Can you recover the flags only with RE? (\*)

(\*) there may be some additional steps involved. ©
Analyze CFGs, rename, retype and combine with dynamic analysis whenever relevant Enjoy the ASCII art and praise @zezadas for the great work with this binary.:

### What are they

- DBI system as an <u>application virtual machine</u> that interprets the ISA of a specific platform
  - usually (but not always) coinciding with the one where the system runs
  - offering instrumentation capabilities to support monitoring and altering instructions and data from an analysis tool component
  - Up to the level of a single instruction
- DBI systems expand standard Dynamic Binary Analysis tasks by
  - Fine grained monitoring capabilities
  - Full control over data and instructions, potentially increasing Reverse Engineering Scope
- Uses
  - Measure performance, Detect vulnerabilities, Force code execution, Fuzz binary programs at the scale of a group of instructions

#### caveats

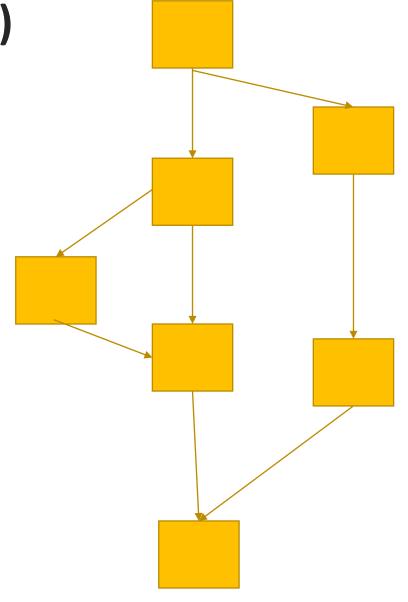
- DBI is vulnerable to specific attacks targeting the emulator
  - Purpose: avoid the use of emulators or induce incorrect results
  - Exploit the fact that DBI tools are slow
  - Exploit the fact that the system is emulated and differs from a real system
- Some approaches
  - Extensive loops Timing measurements
  - Timing measurements
  - Testing for system specific behavior

```
for (n = 0; n < 2000000; ++n)
       EnterCriticalSection(&CriticalSection);
       mw junk 0();
       v6[1] = (int)v6;
       v6[0] = 707220816;
       *( DWORD *)sz = dword 41A4F4;
       CharUpperW(sz);
136
       for ( ii = 0; ii < 5; ++ii )
137
         v6[2] = -199066008;
139
         v8 = 0;
140
       LeaveCriticalSection(&CriticalSection);
141
     DeleteCriticalSection(&CriticalSection);
```

# What are they

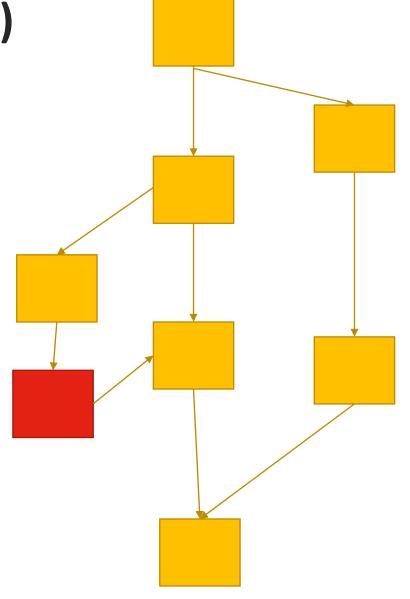
- Instrumentation
  - Insert Code

- Dynamic Binary Instrumentation
  - "Running" Code



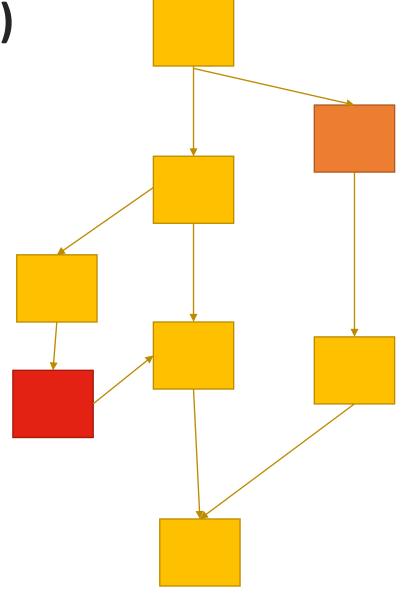
- What are they
- Instrumentation
  - Insert Code

- Dynamic Binary Instrumentation
  - "Running" Code



- What are they
- Instrumentation
  - Insert Code

- Dynamic Binary Instrumentation
  - "Running" Code



### How they work?

- Rebuild a program binary code using some JIT technique
  - Insert trace points and hooks for inspection
  - Divert execution to <u>additional user specified functions</u>
  - Monitor access to memory regions
    - Potentially triggering callbacks on access
  - May reimplement access to IOs or even syscalls and interrupts
  - May create a fully Emulated Execution Environment
    - Can be combined with an Emulation platform such as QEMU or Unicorn (a fork from QEMU)
- Popular tools: valgrind, DynamoRIO, Intel PIN, DynInst, Qiling, Frida

	DBI PRIMITIVES								
APPLICATION DOMAIN	INSTRUCTIONS			SYSTEM	LIBRARY	THREADS &	CODE	EXCEPTIONS	
	MEMORY R/W	CALLS/RETS	BRANCHES	OTHER	CALLS	CALLS	PROCESSES	LOADING	& signals
Cryptoanalysis	<b>✓</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>√</b>					
Malicious Software Analysis	✓	✓	<b>✓</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vulnerability Detection	✓	✓	<b>✓</b>	✓	✓	✓			
SOFTWARE PLAGIARISM	$\checkmark$				✓				
Reverse Engineering	✓	✓	<b>✓</b>	✓	✓	✓			
Information Flow Tracking	<b>√</b>	✓	✓	✓		<b>√</b>			✓
SOFTWARE PROTECTION	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Daniele D'Elia et al, SoK: Using Dynamic Binary Instrumentation for Security, AsiaCCS, 2019

### Why not FRIDA?

- Frida allows binary instrumentation of an executing binary
  - No emulation capabilities
  - Malicious code can de analyzed, but further care is required
- Landscape is wider with additional binaries
  - Firmwares
  - Shellcodes
  - DLLs
  - SOs

### DBI tool that can perform:

- Emulation: Executes binary code step by step, replacing instructions
- Binary instrumentation: allows injection of user specified code
- Cross-platform and cross-architectural analysis: analyze one architecture or OS on another
- Sandboxing: I/O is redirected to fake devices (files, sockets)
- On raw binaries: used to analyze blobs from binary devices or shellcode

#### **Emulation**

- Syscalls and interrupt are implemented in python
  - Program calls syscall/interrupt
  - Qiling invokes handler in python, which mimics a standard system
  - Implementation can be overridden by the user
- Host OS is never called, and result is provided by Qiling
  - Advantages:
    - Great control over the execution
    - Great isolation
  - Disadvantages:
    - Not all calls are implemented
    - Behavior mimics an ideal system and may deviate from reality

#### Instrumentation

- User can define hooks to triggering callbacks on an event
  - Because an emulator is translating code in real time, instruction level hooks are possible

## Example

- Code execution reaches a specific address
- An address is written or read
- A function is called, or is leaving
- An instruction is executed

#### **Cross Platform and Cross Architecture**

- Binary code is emulated, allowing cross architecture execution
  - Target architecture instructions are compiled to native instructions

- Because all syscalls and interrupts are emulated, host platform can differ from target platform
  - As Qiling is based on Unicorn (Qemu), a wide range of possibilities is available

João Paulo Barraca

#### **Loading an Elf**

- Qiling has several loaders
  - MBR
  - PE, ELF, MachO
  - Unstructured binary (shellcode)

```
1 from qiling import *
2
3 def sandbox(path, rootfs):
4    ql = Qiling(path, rootfs)
5    ql.run()
6
7 if __name__ == '__main__':
8    sandbox(['./hello'], '.')
```

- Loader will make code available to be <u>emulated</u> on a secure <u>rootfs</u>
  - Calls to interrupts and syscalls are implemented in python

```
[=]
        brk(input = 0x0)
[=]
        uname(address = 0x800000000d960)
[=]
        access(path = 0x7ffff7dfa9b0, mode = 0x4)
        openat(fd = 0xfffffff9c, path = 0x7fffff7df7b67, flags = 0x80000, mode = 0x0)
[=]
        openat(fd = 0xfffffff9c, path = 0x80000000cef0, flags = 0x80000, mode = 0x0)
[=]
        stat(path = 0x80000000cef0, buf_ptr = 0x80000000cfa0)
        openat(fd = 0xfffffff9c, path = 0x80000000cef0, flags = 0x80000, mode = 0x0)
        stat(path = 0x80000000cef0, buf_ptr = 0x80000000cfa0)
[=]
        openat(fd = 0xfffffff9c, path = 0x80000000cef0, flags = 0x80000, mode = 0x0)
[=]
        stat(path = 0x80000000cef0, buf_ptr = 0x80000000cfa0)
        openat(fd = 0xfffffff9c, path = 0x80000000cef0, flags = 0x80000, mode = 0x0)
[=]
        stat(path = 0x80000000cef0, buf_ptr = 0x80000000cfa0)
[=]
        openat(fd = 0xfffffff9c, path = 0x80000000cef0, flags = 0x80000, mode = 0x0)
        stat(path = 0x80000000cef0, buf_ptr = 0x80000000cfa0)
        openat(fd = 0xfffffff9c, path = 0x80000000cef0, flags = 0x80000, mode = 0x0)
[=]
        stat(path = 0x80000000cef0, buf_ptr = 0x80000000cfa0)
        openat(fd = 0xfffffff9c, path = 0x80000000cef0, flags = 0x80000, mode = 0x0)
        stat(path = 0x80000000cef0, buf_ptr = 0x80000000cfa0)
[=]
        openat(fd = 0xfffffff9c, path = 0x80000000cef0, flags = 0x80000, mode = 0x0)
        read(fd = 0x3, buf = 0x800000000068, len = 0x340)
[=]
        fstat(fd = 0x3, buf_ptr = 0x80000000cfa0)
        mmap(addr = 0x0, length = 0x1c4508, prot = 0x1, flags = 0x802, fd = 0x3, pgoffset = 0x0)
[=]
        mprotect(start = 0x7fffb7dfb000, mlen = 0x196000, prot = 0x0)
[=]
        mmap(addr = 0x7fffb7dfb000, length = 0x14b000, prot = 0x5, flags = 0x812, fd = 0x3, pgoffset = 0x25000)
[=]
        mmap(addr = 0x7fffb7f46000, length = 0x4a000, prot = 0x1, flags = 0x812, fd = 0x3, pgoffset = 0x170000)
[=]
        mmap(addr = 0x7fffb7f91000, length = 0x6000, prot = 0x3, flags = 0x812, fd = 0x3, pgoffset = 0x1ba000)
[=]
        mmap(addr = 0x7fffb7f97000, length = 0x3508, prot = 0x3, flags = 0x32, fd = 0xffffffff, pgoffset = 0x0)
[=]
        close(fd = 0x3)
        mmap(addr = 0x0, length = 0x2000, prot = 0x3, flags = 0x22, fd = 0xfffffffff, pgoffset = 0x0)
[=]
        arch_prctl(ARCHX = 0x1002, ARCH_SET_FS = 0x7fffb7f9bf40)
        mprotect(start = 0x7fffb7f91000, mlen = 0x3000, prot = 0x1)
        mprotect(start = 0x555555557000, mlen = 0x1000, prot = 0x1)
[=]
        mprotect(start = 0x7ffff7dff000, mlen = 0x1000, prot = 0x1)
[=]
        fstat(fd = 0x1, buf_ptr = 0x80000000d630)
[=]
        ioctl(fd = 0x1, cmd = 0x5401, arg = 0x800000000d590)
        brk(input = 0x0)
[=]
        brk(input = 0x55555557c000)
        write(fd = 0x1, buf = 0x555555555b2a0, count = 0x6)
Hello [!]
                0x7fffb7e9bc08: syscall ql_syscall_clock_nanosleep number = 0xe6(230) not implemented
[=]
        write(fd = 0x1, buf = 0x555555555b2a0, count = 0x6)
World
[=]
        exit_group(exit_code = 0x0)
```

#### Overriding a library function

- Functions can be overridden with custom implementations
  - Code can access arguments of basic types (Strings, Ints, Floats)
  - Inside function, other external functions can be called
  - Entire set of registries and memory can be manipulated
  - Return is provided to the calling function to be emulated on a secure rootfs
  - Calls to interrupts and syscalls are implemented in python

```
from qiling import *
    from qiling.os.const import UINT
    import time
    def my sleep(qL):
        args = ql.os.resolve fcall params({'seconds': UINT})
        seconds = args['seconds']
        print(f"Sleep: {seconds}")
        if seconds > 10:
            print("QL: Limiting sleep to 10s")
10
            time.sleep(10)
11
12
        else:
            time.sleep(seconds)
13
14
    def sandbox(path, rootfs):
16
        ql = Qiling(path, rootfs, log_file="hello-2.log", verbose=0)
        ql.set_api('sleep', my sleep)
17
        ql.run()
18
19
    if __name__ == '__main__':
        sandbox(['./hello'], '.')
21
```