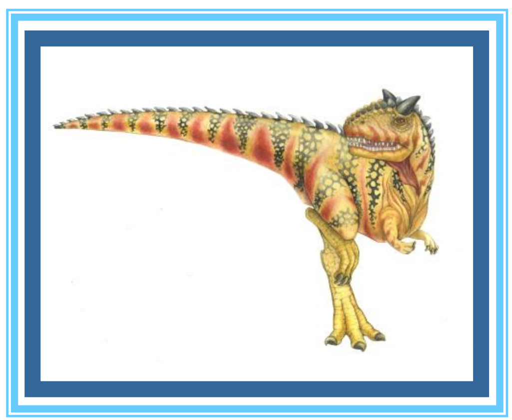
Chapter 17: Protection



Goals of Protection

- In one protection model, computer consists of a collection of objects, hardware or software
- Each object has a unique name and can be accessed through a well-defined set of operations
- Protection problem - ensure that each object is accessed correctly and only by those processes that are allowed to do so

Principles of Protection

- Guiding principle – **principle of least privilege**
  - Programs, users and systems should be given just enough **privileges** to perform their tasks
  - Properly set **permissions** can limit damage if entity has a bug, gets abused
  - Can be static (during life of system, during life of process)
  - Or dynamic (changed by process as needed) – **domain switching, privilege escalation**
  - **Compartmentalization** a derivative concept regarding access to data
    - Process of protecting each individual system component through the use of specific permissions and access restrictions

Principles of Protection (Cont.)

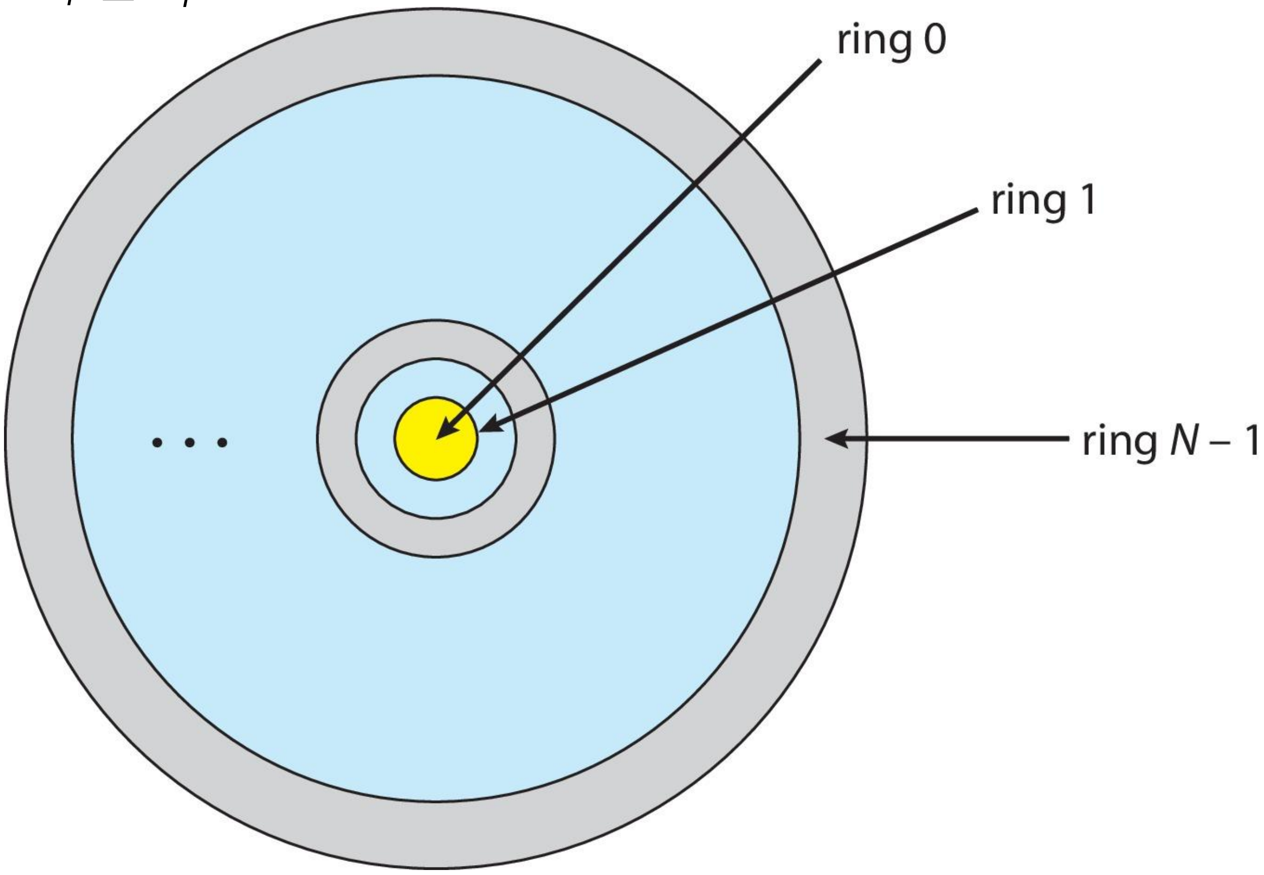
- Must consider "grain" aspect
  - Rough-grained privilege management easier, simpler, but least privilege now done in large chunks
    - For example, traditional Unix processes either have abilities of the associated user, or of root
  - Fine-grained management more complex, more overhead, but more protective
    - File ACL lists, RBAC
- Domain can be user, process, procedure
- **Audit trail** – recording all protection-orientated activities, important to understanding what happened, why, and catching things that shouldn't
- No single principle is a panacea for security vulnerabilities – need **defense in depth**

Protection Rings

- Components ordered by amount of privilege and protected from each other
  - For example, the kernel is in one ring and user applications in another
  - This privilege separation requires hardware support
  - Gates used to transfer between levels, for example the syscall Intel instruction
  - Also traps and interrupts
  - **Hypervisors** introduced the need for yet another ring
  - ARMv7 processors added **TrustZone**(**TZ**) ring to protect crypto functions with access via new **Secure Monitor Call** (**SMC**) instruction
    - Protecting NFC secure element and crypto keys from even the kernel

Protection Rings (MULTICS)

- Let D_i and D_j be any two domain rings
- If $j < I \Rightarrow D_i \subseteq D_j$



Domain of Protection

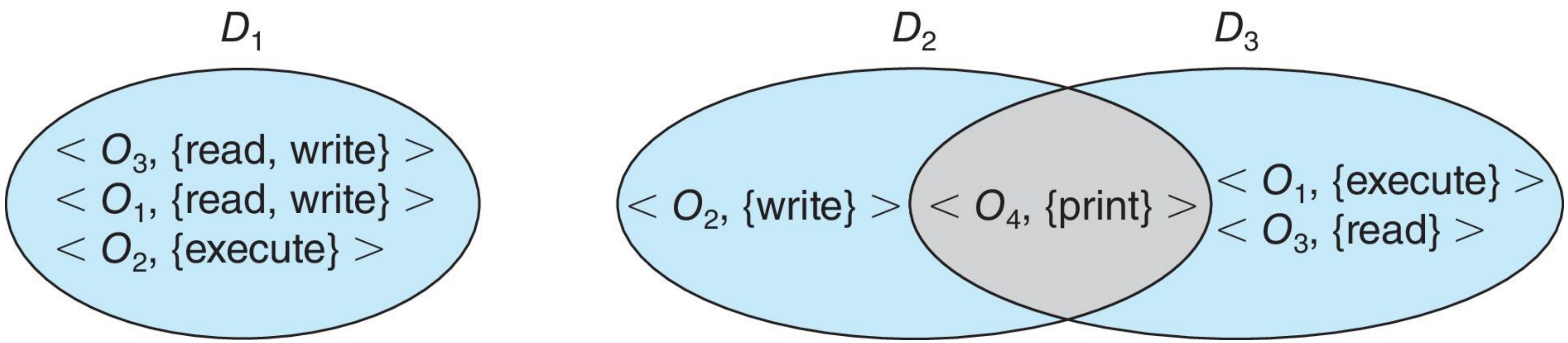
- Rings of protection separate functions into domains and order them hierarchically
- Computer can be treated as processes and objects
  - **Hardware objects** (such as devices) and **software objects** (such as files, programs, semaphores
- Process for example should only have access to objects it currently requires to complete its task – the **need-to-know** principle

Domain of Protection (Cont.)

- Implementation can be via process operating in a **protection domain**
  - Specifies resources process may access
  - Each domain specifies set of objects and types of operations on them
  - Ability to execute an operation on an object is an **access right**
    - <object-name, rights-set>
  - Domains may share access rights
  - Associations can be **static** or **dynamic**
  - If dynamic, processes can **domain switch**

Domain Structure

- Access-right = <*object-name*, *rights-set*>
  where *rights-set* is a subset of all valid operations that can be performed on the object
- Domain = set of access-rights



Domain Implementation (UNIX)

- Domain = user-id
- Domain switch accomplished via file system
  - Each file has associated with it a domain bit (setuid bit)
  - When file is executed and setuid = on, then user-id is set to owner of the file being executed
  - When execution completes user-id is reset
- Domain switch accomplished via passwords
  - `su` command temporarily switches to another user's domain when other domain's password provided
- Domain switching via commands
  - `sudo` command prefix executes specified command in another domain (if original domain has privilege or password given)

Access Matrix

- View protection as a matrix (**access matrix**)
- Rows represent domains
- Columns represent objects
- **`Access(i, j)`** is the set of operations that a process executing in Domain$_i$ can invoke on Object$_j$

object / domain	F_1	F_2	F_3	printer
D_1	read		read	
D_2				print
D_3		read	execute	
D_4	read write		read write	

Use of Access Matrix

- If a process in Domain D_i tries to do "op" on object O_j, then "op" must be in the access matrix
- User who creates object can define access column for that object
- Can be expanded to dynamic protection
  - Operations to add, delete access rights
  - Special access rights:
    - *owner of* O_i
    - *copy op from* O_i *to* O_j *(denoted by "*")*
    - *control* – D_i *can modify* D_j *access rights*
    - *transfer* – *switch from domain* D_i *to* D_j
  - *Copy* and *Owner* applicable to an object
  - *Control* applicable to domain object

Use of Access Matrix (Cont.)

- **Access matrix** design separates mechanism from policy
  - Mechanism
    - Operating system provides access-matrix + rules
    - If ensures that the matrix is only manipulated by authorized agents and that rules are strictly enforced
  - Policy
    - User dictates policy
    - Who can access what object and in what mode
- But doesn't solve the general confinement problem

Access Matrix of Figure A with Domains as Objects

object / domain	F_1	F_2	F_3	laser printer	D_1	D_2	D_3	D_4
D_1	read		read			switch		
D_2				print			switch	switch
D_3		read	execute					
D_4	read write		read write		switch			

Access Matrix with *Copy* Rights

domain \ object	F_1	F_2	F_3
D_1	execute		write*
D_2	execute	read*	execute
D_3	execute		

(a)

domain \ object	F_1	F_2	F_3
D_1	execute		write*
D_2	execute	read*	execute
D_3	execute	read	

(b)

Access Matrix With *Owner* Rights

object / domain	F_1	F_2	F_3
D_1	owner execute		write
D_2		read* owner	read* owner write
D_3	execute		

(a)

object / domain	F_1	F_2	F_3
D_1	owner execute		write
D_2		owner read* write*	read* owner write
D_3		write	write

(b)

Modified Access Matrix of Figure B

object / domain	F_1	F_2	F_3	laser printer	D_1	D_2	D_3	D_4
D_1	read		read			switch		
D_2				print			switch	switch control
D_3		read	execute					
D_4	write		write		switch			

Implementation of Access Matrix

- Generally, a sparse matrix
- Option 1 – Global table
  - Store ordered triples **`<domain, object, rights-set>`** in table
  - A requested operation M on object O_j within domain D_i -> search table for $< D_i, O_j, R_k >$
    - with $M \in R_k$
  - But table could be large -> won't fit in main memory
  - Difficult to group objects (consider an object that all domains can read)

Implementation of Access Matrix (Cont.)

- Option 2 – Access lists for objects
  - Each column implemented as an access list for one object
  - Resulting per-object list consists of ordered pairs **`<domain, rights-set>`** defining all domains with non-empty set of access rights for the object
  - Easily extended to contain default set -> If M ∈ default set, also allow access

Implementation of Access Matrix (Cont.)

- Each column = Access-control list for one object
  Defines who can perform what operation

  Domain 1 = Read, Write
  Domain 2 = Read
  Domain 3 = Read

- Each Row = Capability List (like a key)
  For each domain, what operations allowed on what objects

  Object F1 – Read

  Object F4 – Read, Write, Execute

  Object F5 – Read, Write, Delete, Copy

Implementation of Access Matrix (Cont.)

- Option 3 – Capability list for domains
  - Instead of object-based, list is domain based
  - **Capability list** for domain is list of objects together with operations allows on them
  - Object represented by its name or address, called a **capability**
  - Execute operation M on object O_j, process requests operation and specifies capability as parameter
    - Possession of capability means access is allowed
  - Capability list associated with domain but never directly accessible by domain
    - Rather, protected object, maintained by OS and accessed indirectly
    - Like a "secure pointer"
    - Idea can be extended up to applications

Implementation of Access Matrix (Cont.)

- Option 4 – Lock-key
  - Compromise between access lists and capability lists
  - Each object has list of unique bit patterns, called **locks**
  - Each domain as list of unique bit patterns called **keys**
  - Process in a domain can only access object if domain has key that matches one of the locks

Comparison of Implementations

- Many trade-offs to consider
  - Global table is simple, but can be large
  - Access lists correspond to needs of users
    - Determining set of access rights for domain non-localized so difficult
    - Every access to an object must be checked
      - Many objects and access rights -> slow
  - Capability lists useful for localizing information for a given process
    - But revocation capabilities can be inefficient
  - Lock-key effective and flexible, keys can be passed freely from domain to domain, easy revocation

Comparison of Implementations (Cont.)

- Most systems use combination of access lists and capabilities
  - First access to an object -> access list searched
    - If allowed, capability created and attached to process
      - Additional accesses need not be checked
    - After last access, capability destroyed
    - Consider file system with ACLs per file

Revocation of Access Rights

- Various options to remove the access right of a domain to an object
  - **Immediate vs. delayed**
  - **Selective vs. general**
  - **Partial vs. total**
  - **Temporary vs. permanent**
- **Access List** – Delete access rights from access list
  - **Simple** – search access list and remove entry
  - **Immediate**, **general** or **selective**, **total** or **partial**, **permanent** or **temporary**

Revocation of Access Rights (Cont.)

- **Capability List** – Scheme required to locate capability in the system before capability can be revoked
  - **Reacquisition** – periodic delete, with require and denial if revoked
  - **Back-pointers** – set of pointers from each object to all capabilities of that object (Multics)
  - **Indirection** – capability points to global table entry which points to object – delete entry from global table, not selective (CAL)
  - **Keys** – unique bits associated with capability, generated when capability created
    - Master key associated with object, key matches master key for access
    - Revocation – create new master key
    - Policy decision of who can create and modify keys – object owner or others?

End of Chapter 17