

Assignment 4: Minix Secret Driver

This is the template I passed out in the lab (well, slightly modified). It works reasonably well to have each step of the lab be a \section and each component below it a \subsection. For the “problem set” labs an `enumerate` environment is probably more appropriate.

2 Overall Architecture of the Driver

Minix uses a non-monolithic, message-based, callback framework for its kernel. A mouthful, but this just means that Minix is structured to be a very modular, framework-y codebase. This is great for me, since all I really have to do is write callback functions for `open()`, `close()` and `transfer()` to finish the assignment. To me, this means that all my Secret has to do is define handlers for:

- Parse the incoming `message *` for its sender’s credentials in the callback for `open()`.
- Persist who said owner is globally.
- Bounce users who try and access my Secret if they ask for credentials that don’t agree with my business logic. E.g., no read/write access (why would you write a secret and then immediately read it again?) and no reading a secret you’re not the owner of.
- Lastly, allow processes to transfer ownership of my Secret to each other via a custom `SSGRANT` flag that can be retrieved programmatically.
- Of course, I need to register my driver as a legitimate Minix driver in its kernel, so I have to modify a few Minix files before everything comes together to work.

3 Description of Driver Implementation

3.1 Development Environment

- Deployed my driver to a Minix 3.2.1 installation.
- Installed Minix on a VM: VMware Fusion 5.0.0, hosted on my Mac.
- Wrote driver code in Sublime Text 2 (boo) and read up on the Minix source in Eclipse CDT.
- This report is written in TeXShop for Mac.

3.2 Files modified

- `/etc/system.conf` to register my service in the OS.
- `/usr/src/include/sys/ioctl.h` to register the `SSGRANT` flag for ownership between processes transfers later.

3.3 The code

Live version available [here](#).

4 Driver Behavior

```
help: not found
# man minix
man: no entry for minix in the manual.
# cat /dev/Secret
Opened secret. Caller's credentials are:
PID: 7
UID: 0
GID: 0

secret_transfer()
Hello, New World!
secret_transfer()
secret_close()
# su girum
$ cat /dev/Secret
Opened secret. Caller's credentials are:
PID: 7
UID: 0
GID: 0

secret_transfer()
Hello, New World!
secret_transfer()
secret_close()
$
```

5 Results

5.1 Problems encountered

- I couldn't compile Minix locally. Eclipse thus wouldn't work for this project. This was because Minix doesn't use standard `gmake` for its Makefiles. Instead, Minix uses some unknown custom `make` utility that includes a ton of conditional logic used to auto generate parts of the Makefiles. In the end, I couldn't manage to move Minix's version of `make` over to my local machine.

- Right as I began coding (after 6 hours of reading, config and more reading), my `getnucured(2)` call refused to work properly. I'm passing it the from `m_source` from the `message *` passed in via the framework, and fill up a `struct ucred` initialized on the runtime stack. The UID is correctly "0" when the root user uses my Secret device, but it the UID is still "0" when a non-root user uses the same Secret device. I can't disambiguate between users.

5.2 Solutions attempted

- In attempting to fix the compilation issue (really just a `make` issue, since Minix doesn't use `gmake` and instead relies on heavy conditionals to auto generate its Makefiles) I tried copying over the entire `/usr/src/tools` folder like [this guy](#) promised I should. I also tried installing and using [NetBSD make](#) to no avail. I gave up and switched to Sublime Text, but I realize now how dependent I am on my IDE. Without Content Assist, I code about as rapidly as a Galapagos Tortoise.

5.3 Results obtained

Just the modified hello world program so far. And a lot of new knowledge on Minix.

5.4 Lessons learned

- Don't write Makefiles in non-`gmake`. Not being able to compile Minix on my own machine was by far my biggest headache. But that's more for the writers of Minix to learn from.

6 Other things (as necessary)

Source code that I have submitted via handin to asgn4, and available online at [my GitHub account](#).