

# CSCI 2021: ELF Files, Linking, and Loading

Chris Kauffman

*Last Updated:  
Fri Apr 30 10:07:53 AM CDT 2021*

# Logistics

## Reading Bryant/O'Hallaron

- ▶ Ch 9: Virtual Memory (completed)
- ▶ Ch 7: ELF / Linking (now)

## Goals

- ▶ Final Exam Logistics
- ▶ Evaluations
- ▶ ELF Files
- ▶ Linking/Loading

## P5

- ▶ 1 Required Problem
- ▶ Posted + Video Walkthrough

Date	Event
	HW 13 Virt Mem
4/23 Fri	Virtual Mem 1/2
4/23 Mon	Virtual Mem 2/2
	P5 Release
4/26 Wed	ELF Files/Linking 1/2
	Lab 14 VirtMem
	HW 14 Linking
4/28 Fri	Obj Code/Linking 2/2
5/03 Mon	Last Lecture, Review
	P5 Due
	Course Evals Due
5/08 Sat	<b>Final Exam Opens 1:30pm</b>
5/12 Wed	<b>Final Exam Closes 3:30pm</b>

# Official Student Rating of Teaching (SRTs)

- ▶ Official UMN Evals are done online this semester
- ▶ Available here: <https://srt.umn.edu/blue>
- ▶ **EVALUATE ONLY YOUR LECTURE SECTION  
Lec 001 or Lec 010**
- ▶ Comment on labs in lecture eval, don't bother with lab section eval
- ▶ **Due** Mon 5/03/2021, last day of class

# Overview

- ▶ Review building programs
- ▶ Executable and Linkable Format (ELF) Files
- ▶ Linker: Merging ELF files
- ▶ Loading: Creating running Problems
- ▶ Relocation
- ▶ Static vs Dynamic Linking
- ▶ Static/Dynamic Libraries

*NOTE: May not have time to cover all these topics and whatever we don't get to won't appear on any exams.*

## Exercise: Separate Compilation

```
# COMPILATION 1
> gcc -c func_01.c
> gcc -c main_func.c
> gcc -o main_func main_func.o func_01.o

# COMPILATION 2
> gcc -o main_func main_func.c func_01.c
```

- ▶ Describe differences between compilations above
- ▶ What is the result in each case?
- ▶ How are they different: any *artifacts* created in one but not the other?
- ▶ Any advantages/disadvantages to them?

# Answers: Separate Compilation

```
# COMPILATION 1
> gcc -c func_01.c
> gcc -c main_func.c
> gcc -o main_func main_func.o func_01.o

# COMPILATION 2
> gcc -o main_func main_func.c func_01.c
```

## Compilation 1: Separate Compilation

- ▶ Separately compile `func_01.c` and `main_func.c` to binary
- ▶ Results in 2 **.o object files**
- ▶ Final step is to **link** two objects together to create an executable

## Compilation 2: “Together” Compilation

- ▶ Compile all the C files at once to produce an executable
- ▶ Still likely to internally do separate compilation BUT no `.o` files will be produced, only executable

Advantages of Separate Compilation to follow

## Exercise: Separate Compilation Time

- ▶ Mack is building a large application
- ▶ Has a `main_func.c` and `func_01.c`, `func_02.c` ... that define application, up to `func_20.c`
- ▶ During build process notices that it takes about 10s for to compile each C file and 20s to link the C files
- ▶ After editing files to add features, Mack usually compiles to project like this
  - > `gcc -o main_func *.c`
- ▶ **Estimate** his typical build time in seconds
- ▶ **Suggest** a way that he might reduce his build time if he has edited only a small number of files

## Answers: Separate Compilation Time

Total Build Time `gcc -o main_func *.c`

Item	Example	Build	Tot
Library C files	func_01.c	20 x 10s	200s
Main C file	main_func.c	1 x 10s	10s
Linking	all .o files	1 x 20s	20s
Total Time	~ 4min	22 steps	230s

- ▶ Explicitly recompiling all C files to object code despite many not changing
- ▶ Spends valuable human time waiting to redo the same task as has been done many before



# Answers: Separate Compilation Time

## Exploit Separate Compilation

- ▶ Assume already compiled all files, have `func_01.o`, `func_02.o`
- ▶ Edit `func_08.c` to add a new feature
- ▶ **Don't** recompile C files that haven't changed
- ▶ Compile like this

```
> gcc -c func_08.c
```

```
> gcc -o main_func *.o
```

Item	Example	Build	Time
Library .o files	<code>func_01.o</code>	19 x 0s	0s
Main .o file	<code>main_func.o</code>	1 x 0s	0s
Changed .c files	<code>func_08.c</code>	1 x 10s	10s
Linking	all .o files	1 x 20s	20s
Total Time	~ 30 seconds	2 steps	30s

## Build Systems Exploit Separate Compilation

- ▶ Build Systems like make / Makefile exploit separate compilation
- ▶ Build system establishes a dependency structure
- ▶ **Targets** are usually files to create
- ▶ **Dependencies** are other files/targets that must be up to date to create a given target
- ▶ Only rebuild a target if a dependency **changes**

```
# Typical Makefile gives targets, dependencies,  
# commands to create target using dependencies  
# TARGET : DEPENDENCIES  
#      COMMANDS / ACTIONS
```

```
main_func : main_func.o func_01.o func_02.o  
      gcc -o main_funcs main_func.o func_01.o func_02.o
```

```
main_func.o : main_func.c  
      gcc -c main_funcs.c
```

```
func_01.o : func_01.c  
      gcc -c funcs_01.c
```

## Example Builds from big-compile/

```
> make clean
rm -f *.o main_func

# first compiles, no object files built, build everything
> make main_func
gcc -c main_func.c
gcc -c func_01.c
gcc -c func_02.c
...
gcc -c func_20.c
gcc -o main_func main_func.o func_01.o func_02.o...

# edit func_08.c

# 1 file changed, recompile it and re-link
> make main_func
gcc -c func_08.c      # ONLY NEED TO RECOMPILE THIS
gcc -o main_func main_func.o func_01.o func_02.o...

# no edits, no need to rebuild
> make main_func
make: Nothing to be done for 'main_func'.
```

# The Immense Journey (apologies to Loren Eisley)

From C source file to running process involves a variety of tools, formats, software and hardware, summarized for Linux below

1. *Compilation*: gcc preprocesses `prog.c` file, converts to internal representation, optimizes, produces assembly code (stop at this stage with `-S`)
2. *Assembly*: gas invoked by gcc to turn a `prog.s` file to a `prog.o` ELF file, may be other `.o` files involved for multiple `.c` files
3. *Linking*: ld invoked by gcc to link multiple `.o` files to single executable or library, copy in any statically linked library code, indicates if executable has dynamic library dependencies
4. *Stored Program*: Now have an executable program in ELF format stored on disk waiting to be run; call it `prog.out`
5. *Loading*: `ld-linux.so` invoked by shell to load `prog.out` into memory, sets up virtual memory map for `.data` / `.text` / heap / stack, initializes `.bss` sections to 0, resolves any dynamic library links required at load time, sets `%rip` to first program instruction
6. *Running*: OS handles remaining behavior of running program (**process**), running, sleeping, exiting, killing on segfaults

# Object Files and ELF

- ▶ Binary files can't be random so will usually adhere to some standard
- ▶ **Executable and Linkable Format (ELF)** is standard for the results of compilation on Unix systems
- ▶ Stores program data in a variety of **sections** in binary
- ▶ Explicitly designed to allow binary objects to be
  - ▶ Executed (programs)
  - ▶ Merged with other objects (linked)

*Historically, ELF was preceded by a dated format called `a.out`: still default name of gcc output programs*

ELF header
Segment header table (required for executables)
.text section
.rodata section
.data section
.bss section
.symtab section
.rel.text section
.rel.data section
.debug section
Section header table

## Brief Tour of ELF Sections

- ▶ ELF defines sections that are used in specific circumstances
  - ▶ Always ELF Header at the beginning
  - ▶ Always Program (Segment) Header Table for executable
  - ▶ Always Section Header Table for linkable objects
- ▶ Some sections like `.debug` are common but don't appear in ELF specification (have their own DWARF spec)

Section	Brief Description
ELF Header	Global Info (32- or 64-bit, Executable?, Byte ordering, etc.)
Program Header Table	For executable programs, virtual address space info
Section Header Table	Descriptions of sections and positions in file
<code>.text</code>	Opcodes (binary assembly) that can be executed
<code>.rodata</code>	Read Only data like string constants
<code>.data</code>	Initialized global variables, space for values
<code>.bss</code>	Un-initialized global variables, no space for values
<code>.symtab</code>	Table of publicly available symbols for funcs/vars
<code>.strtab</code>	Null-terminated strings, often names of things in <code>.symtab</code>
<code>.shstrtab</code>	Null-terminated strings, often names section headers
<code>.debug</code>	Debug info from gcc <code>-g</code> in DWARF format
<code>.rel.text</code>	Relocation information for <code>.text</code> section
<code>.rel.data</code>	Relocation information for <code>.data</code> section



## Linking: Merging Binary Files to One

**Linking:** merge multiple `.o` into one `.o` OR executable file

- ▶ Merge `.text` section with instructions
- ▶ Merge `.data` section with global variables
- ▶ Merge `.symtab` modifying positions of where things exist, etc.

## Symbol Resolution

- ▶ Multiple object files define a symbol, must resolve which definition to use
- ▶ Some tricky bugs can arise in resolution

## Relocation

- ▶ Adjust offsets of things in symbol table
- ▶ Change any instructions which use locations that have changed

Linkers must deal with a lot of details; we will only touch on a few important principles and how they relate C/Assembly programs



# Linker: Multiple .o to Single/Executable

- ▶ A linker converts multiple .o files to...

- ▶ An executable (default)
- ▶ Single .o file (-r option)

- ▶ gcc automatically invokes the linker when creating executables

- ▶ Can also manually play with linker: command 'ld'

- ▶ SO: Why is the Unix linker called 'ld'?

- ▶ Rarely use ld by hand: difficult to generate executables properly

- ▶ gcc invokes ld with *many* additional options / libraries to create executables

```
# Demo merging two .o files with ld
```

```
> nm func_01.o # names in .o file
0000000000000000 T func_01
                 U puts
```

```
> nm func_02.o # names in .o file
0000000000000000 T func_02
                 U puts
```

```
# manually link to create combined .o
> ld -r func_01.o func_02.o \
    -o funcs_12.o
```

```
> nm funcs_12.o # names in .o file
0000000000000000 T func_01
0000000000000013 T func_02
                 U puts
```

```
# can't create executable with
# undefined symbols and no main()
```

```
> ld func_01.o func_02.o \
    -o executable.o
```

```
ld: warning: cannot find
entry symbol _start;
defaulting to 00000000004000e8
func_01.o: In function `func_01':
func_01.c:(.text+0xc): `puts' undefined
func_02.o: In function `func_02':
func_02.c:(.text+0xc): `puts' undefined
```

# Symbol Resolution by the Linker

- ▶ Linker must resolve **symbols** when merging relocatable objects (.o files)
- ▶ Only global stuff qualify as symbols: **functions, global variables**. These can be seen / used from outside a C file
- ▶ Local variables inside functions will NOT have symbols associated
- ▶ A few rules apply during symbol resolution
  1. .o files can have undefined symbols but executables (mostly) cannot
  2. Symbols are classified as **strong and weak**; can only have one **strong** definition but many weak definitions
  3. Strong definitions are mostly named functions and global variables
  4. Weak definitions are mostly uninitialized global variables and extern declarations for global variables, function prototypes

## Exercise: Linking Trouble

Consider these two C files

```
// FILE: x_int.c
int x=0;           // global vars
int y=0;           // strongly defined

void x_to_neg8(); // in different .o

#include <stdio.h>
int main(){
    x_to_neg8(); // set x only
    printf("x: %d\n",x);
    printf("y: %d\n",y);
    return 0;
}
```

```
// FILE: x_long.c
long x;           // global var
                // weakly defined

void x_to_neg8(){
    x = -8;       // set global var
}
```

### Predictions

Compile and run: **predict output**

```
> gcc x_int.c x_long.c
/usr/bin/ld: Warning: ...
> ./a.out
x: ??
y: ??
```

## Answers: Linking Trouble

- ▶ Two files define the sizes of global variable x differently

```
// FILE: x_long.c
long x;          // uninitialized, weak symbol
// FILE: x_int.c
int x = 0;       // initialized, strong symbol, prevails
int y = 0;
```

- ▶ Linker warns of this during compilation (see below)
- ▶ Variable y in x\_int.c, adjacent to 4-byte x in memory
- ▶ Function void x\_to\_neg8() is in x\_long.c
- ▶ Writes 8 bytes to location x clobbering y

```
> gcc x_int.c x_long.c
/usr/bin/ld: Warning: alignment 4 of symbol `x'
in /tmp/ccs1zLtj.o is smaller than 8 in /tmp/cc7ZX9Q.o

> ./a.out
x: -8
y: -1
```

- ▶ Message: Global variables are dangerous in linking (and for code design in general) [but you knew that already]

# The Value of Headers and extern declarations

- ▶ Headers (.h) declare global symbols for all C files that will use them
- ▶ May declare *external* variables which are defined in another file

```
// FILE: x_to_neg8.h
extern long x;
void x_to_neg8();
-----
// FILE: x_to_neg8.c
#include "x_to_neg8.h"
long x; // actual global var
void x_to_neg8(){
    x = -8;
}
-----
// FILE: x_main.c
#include "x_to_neg8.h"
// there will be an x var
// and x_to_neg8() func
...
```

- ▶ Proper use of headers allow compiler to warn of conflicting definitions

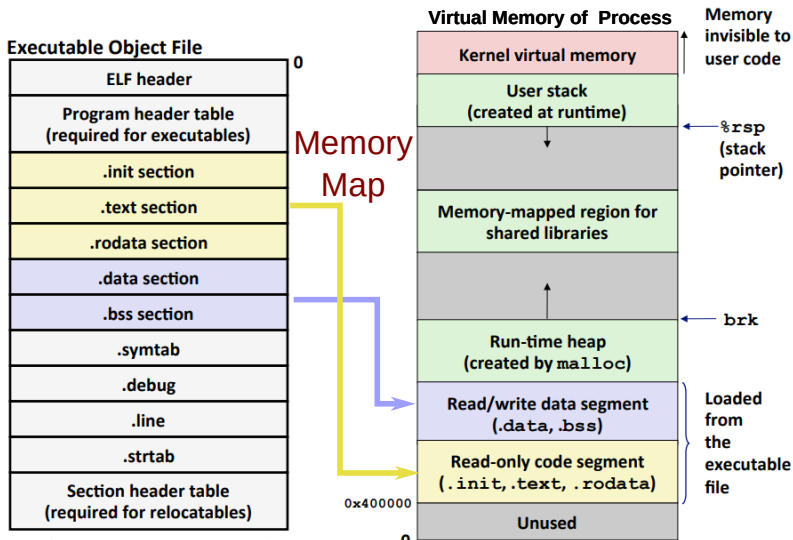
```
// FILE: x_main.c
#include "x_to_neg8.h"
int x = 0; // !!!
...

> gcc -c x_main_bad.c
x_main_bad.c:4:5: error:
conflicting types for 'x'
    int x = 0; // !!!
    ^
x_to_neg8.h:7:13: note:
previous declaration of
'x' was here
    extern long x;
    ^
```

- ▶ Without using .h header files, compiler can't help as much

# Loading ELF: Stored Program becomes Running Process

- ▶ Loader maps ELF file Text/Globals into virtual memory
- ▶ Loader maps Stack/Heap into virtual memory



# Linker and Loader

## Traditional: Static Linking

- ▶ Linker merges .o files to create executable
- ▶ All global symbols must be resolved: copy text for functions into the executable from libraries
- ▶ **Loader** copies executable into memory, set %rip to first instruction address, notifies OS to schedule it for execution
- ▶ All code/data for running program is in its own memory image

## Modern: Dynamic Linking

- ▶ Linker merges .o files to create executable
- ▶ Global symbols from Dynamic Libraries are left Undefined (U)
- ▶ Loader copies executable into memory, sets %rip but..
- ▶ Creates a virtual memory map to definitions for library functions **dynamically linking** to definitions
- ▶ Code for running program is spread across its memory image and shared libraries

## gcc: Statically vs Dynamically Linked Executables

- ▶ By default gcc produces 'mixed' executables
  - ▶ Use as many dynamic libraries (.so) as possible
  - ▶ Use a static version (.a) of library ONLY if no dynamic version is available
- ▶ With the -static option, use all static libraries
- ▶ Note the differences reported by the file command below

```
> cat hello.c
```

```
#include <stdio.h>
int main(int argc, char *argv[]){
    printf("Hello world! I'm a program\n");
    return 0;
}
```

```
# compile static dynamically linked vs statically linked
```

```
> gcc -o hello_dynamic hello.c
```

```
> gcc -o hello_static hello.c -static
```

```
# examine file types
```

```
> file hello_static
```

```
hello_static: ELF 64-bit LSB executable, x86-64, statically linked
```

```
> file hello_dynamic
```

```
hello_dynamic: ELF 64-bit LSB shared object, x86-64, dynamically linked,
interpreter /lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2
```



## Exercise: Static/Dynamic Program Sizes

- ▶ Examine file sizes of two programs below reported by du
- ▶ Which program is bigger on disk in number of bytes?
- ▶ **Why** is there a size difference?

```
# compile static dynamically linked vs statically linked
> cat hello.c
#include <stdio.h>
int main(int argc, char *argv[]){
    printf("Hello world! I'm a program\n");
    return 0;
}

> gcc -o hello_dynamic hello.c
> gcc -o hello_static hello.c -static

# examine size of executables in bytes
> du -b hello_*
9664 hello_dynamic
721424 hello_static
```

# Answers: Static/Dynamic Program Sizes

```
# examine size of executables in bytes
> du -b hello_*
 9664  hello_dynamic  #   9,664 bytes
721424 hello_static  # 721,424 bytes
```

- ▶ All libc.a functions needed (printf/puts/malloc/etc.) copied into statically linked version
- ▶ Dynamically linked version has undefined references to functions like puts() which will be resolved at load/run time

```
# examine symbols/functions
# in static/dynamic executables
```

```
> nm hello_static
```

```
...
00000000004009dd T main
# T: defined "strong" symbol
...
0000000000408460 W puts
# W: defined "weak" symbol
...
```

```
> nm hello_dynamic
```

```
...
000000000000064a T main
# T: defined "strong" symbol
...
                                U puts@@GLIBC_2.2.5
# U: undefined
# your function is in
# a different castle
```

## Libraries Required at Load/Runtime

- ▶ Most executables know ahead of time which dynamic libraries will be needed at run time
- ▶ Can examine this with the ldd command: print shared object dependencies

```
> gcc -o hello_dynamic hello.c
```

```
> gcc -o hello_static hello.c -static
```

```
# examine which libraries will be dynamically linked
```

```
# compile static dynamically linked vs statically linked
```

```
> ldd hello_static  
not a dynamic executable
```

```
> ldd hello_dynamic  
linux-vdso.so.1 (0x00007ffe9b0fb000)  
libc.so.6 => /usr/lib/libc.so.6 (0x00007f6a8c295000) #printf!  
/lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2 =>  
/usr/lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2 (0x00007f6a8c84e000)
```

# Linking Against Standard Libraries

- ▶ At link time, linker must know about library dependencies
- ▶ gcc option `-l` will link against a library
  - > `gcc do_math.c -lm` # link to math library
  - > `gcc do_pthreads.c -lpthread` # link to threads library
- ▶ Default Convention: `-lmystuff` tries linking files
  - ▶ `libmystuff.so` (dynamic lib) THEN
  - ▶ `libmystuff.a` (static lib)
- ▶ Force use of ONLY static libraries with `-static` option
- ▶ GCC **always** links `libc` (unless using `-nostdlib`)
- ▶ Compiler/Linker searches known directories for headers and libraries

```
> gcc -v do_math.c -lm          # -v: verbose output
...
#include <...> search starts here:
/usr/lib/gcc/x86_64-pc-linux-gnu/7.2.1/include
/usr/local/include
/usr/lib/gcc/x86_64-pc-linux-gnu/7.2.1/include-fixed
/usr/include
...
LIBRARY_PATH=/lib/./usr/lib/...
```

# Creating/Linking Statically Linked Libraries

- ▶ Statically Linked Libraries are **archives** with `.a` extension
- ▶ Traditional form of program libraries, comprised of a bunch of `.o` files
- ▶ Utility `ar` allows creation, modification, inspection of `.a` files
- ▶ Most systems include `/lib/libc.a` to allow creation statically linked programs
- ▶ System `.a` archives are identical in structure to user-created libraries

```
> gcc -g -Wall -c tree.c
> gcc -g -Wall -c array.c
> gcc -g -Wall -c list.c
> gcc -g -Wall -c util.c

# create archive with ar
> ar rcs libds_search.a \
    tree.o array.o list.o util.o

> file libds_search.a
libds_search.a: current ar archive

# show .o files in archive
> ar t libds_search.a
tree.o array.o list.o util.o

> ar t /lib/libc.a | grep printf.o
vfprintf.o vprintf.o reg-printf.o
fprintf.o printf.o snprintf.o
...
```

# Linking Against User Libraries

- ▶ Final Exam review exercises will discuss linking against user-libraries NOT in standard library directories

```
> ls ds_search_static/  
libds_search.a  
ds_search.h
```

# PROBLEM 1

```
> gcc do_search.c -lds_search  
do_search.c:8:10: fatal error:  
  ds_search.h: No such file or directory  
    #include "ds_search.h"  
            ^~~~~~  
compilation terminated.
```

# PROBLEM 2

```
> gcc do_search.c -lds_search ...  
/usr/bin/ld: cannot find -lds_search  
collect2: error: ld returned 1 exit status
```

- ▶ Compilers have options to resolve these two problems

# Directing Compiler to non-standard Locations

```
> ls ds_search_static/  
libds_search.a  
ds_search.h
```

```
# PROBLEM 1
```

```
# Use -I to give "includes" directory with header
```

```
> gcc do_search.c -lds_search \  
    -I ds_search_static/    # header directory for ds_search.h  
/usr/bin/ld: cannot find -lds_search  
collect2: error: ld returned 1 exit status
```

```
# PROBLEM 2
```

```
# Use -L to add a directory to search for libraries
```

```
> gcc do_search.c -lds_search \  
    -I ds_search_static/    # header directory for ds_search.h  
    -L ds_search_static/    # library directory with libds_search.a  
> file a.out
```

```
a.out: ELF 64-bit LSB shared object, x86-64
```

# Creating Dynamic Libraries

- ▶ Dynamically Libraries are **shared objects** with `.so` extension (or `.dll` if you are a Windows user)
- ▶ Created by invoking compiler linker with appropriate options
  - ▶ Compile option `fPIC` for **position independent code**
  - ▶ Link option `-shared` for a shared object
- ▶ Dynamic libraries may depend on other dynamic libraries

```
> gcc -g -Wall -fpic -c tree.c
> gcc -g -Wall -fpic -c array.c
> gcc -g -Wall -fpic -c list.c
> gcc -g -Wall -fpic -c util.c

# create shared object with gcc
> gcc -shared -o libds_search.so
  \ tree.o array.o list.o util.o

> file libds_search.so
libds_search.so: ELF 64-bit LSB
shared object, x86-64, ...

# show dependencies
> ldd libds_search.so
    linux-vdso.so.1 (0x00007ffce291e000)
    libc.so.6 => /usr/lib/libc.so.6 (0x00007f8e4b1b1000)
    /usr/lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2 (0x00007f8e4b1b1000)
```



## Exercise: A Dynamic Hitch

Consider the below hitch in the wonder of dynamic libraries

```
> gcc do_search.c -lds_search \
    -I ds_search_dynamic/ \
    -L ds_search_dynamic/

> a.out
a.out: error while loading shared libraries:
libds_search.so: cannot open shared object file:
No such file or directory

> ldd a.out
linux-vdso.so.1
libds_search.so => not found    !!!!
libc.so.6 => /usr/lib/libc.so.6
/lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2 => /usr/lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2
```

- ▶ What went wrong?
- ▶ Thoughts on how to resolve?
- ▶ Why didn't this happen in the statically linked case?

## Answers: A Dynamic Hitch

- ▶ Compiler informed that `libds_search.so` was in a non-standard directory
- ▶ **Loader** NOT informed of this
- ▶ Loader searched `/lib/` and other places, didn't find `libds_search.so` gave up on loading the program
- ▶ Must inform loader of non-standard directories for libraries with `LD_LIBRARY_PATH`
- ▶ An **environment variable** honored by loader, directories to search aside from standard locations
- ▶ Environment variables can be set in most shells and are looked for by programs to modify their behaviour
- ▶ Default command shell on many Unixes is `bash` with env't var syntax `export VAR=some_value`
- ▶ Often set vars in initialization files like `.bashrc` or `.bash_init`

```
export PAGER=less           # a better 'more'  
export EDITOR=emacs         # major improvement  
export BROWSER=chromium     # open source baby
```

## Answers: A Dynamic Hitch

Below is a complete session which fixes the loading problem

```
> a.out
a.out: error while loading shared libraries:
libds_search.so: cannot open shared object file:
No such file or directory

> export LD_LIBRARY_PATH="ds_search_dynamic"

> ldd a.out
linux-vdso.so.1
libds_search.so => ds_search_dynamic/libds_search.so  :-)
libc.so.6 => /usr/lib/libc.so.6
/lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2 => /usr/lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2
> a.out
Searching 2048 elem array, 10 repeats: 1.6470e-01 seconds
```

If distributing a .so, either

- ▶ Install it in a standard location like /usr/lib/ (admin access)
- ▶ Notify users of library to adjust LD\_LIBRARY\_PATH

## Exercise: Dynamic Loading Tricks

Consider the following strange session

```
> gcc hello.c
> a.out
Hello World!
My favorite int is 32 and float is 1.234000

> gcc -shared -fPIC -Wl,-soname -Wl,libsamy_printf.so \
    -o libsamy_printf.so samy_printf.c -ldl
> export LD_PRELOAD=$PWD/libsamy_printf.so

> a.out
Hello World!
... but most of all, Samy is my hero.
My favorite int is 32 and float is 1.234000
... but most of all, Samy is my hero.
```

Why would compiling another piece of code change the behavior of an **already compiled program**?

## Answers: Dynamic Loading Tricks

- ▶ One can **interpose** library calls: ask dynamic loader to link a function to a different definition
- ▶ Only possible with dynamic linking but a powerful technique
- ▶ In this case, re-define `printf()`, similar tricks by `valgrind` for `malloc()` / `free()`

```
> gcc hello.c
> a.out
> ldd a.out
    linux-vdso.so.1
    libc.so.6 => /usr/lib/libc.so.6
    /lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2 => /usr/lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2

> export LD_PRELOAD=$PWD/libsamy_printf.so
> ldd a.out
    linux-vdso.so.1 (0x00007fff591d6000)
    /home/kauffman/2021-S2018/.../libsamy_printf.so  !!!!
    libc.so.6 => /usr/lib/libc.so.6
    libdl.so.2 => /usr/lib/libdl.so.2
    /lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2 => /usr/lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2
```

# Valgrind and Your own Malloc

- ▶ Valgrind replaces normal `malloc()` / `free()` with its own version which is slower but allows error checking
- ▶ Uses dynamic loading tricks for this so you don't need to recompile your program
- ▶ If you complete `el_malloc.c`, you could extend it to a full allocator (would need `realloc()`, use of `sbrk()` for heap management, define `malloc()` / `free()`)
- ▶ Use **library interposition** with `LD_PRELOAD` dynamically link in your own programs
- ▶ [Brief Instructions in the GNU libc manual](#) on how to do this

## Exercise: Initialized vs Uninitialized Data Matters

Some interesting engineering tricks are baked into the ELF file format. Observe:

```
// FILE: big_data.c
long arr[20000] = {1,2,3};
int main(){
    for(int i=0; i<1024; i++){
        arr[i] = i;
    }
    return 0;
}
```

```
> gcc -c big_data.c # compile to object
> du -b big_data.o  # print number of bytes
161384 big_data.o
```

```
> gcc -c big_bss.c # compile to object
> du -b big_bss.o  # print number of bytes
1384 big_bss.o
```

```
// FILE: big_bss.c
long arr[20000] = {};
int main(){
    for(int i=0; i<1024; i++){
        arr[i] = i;
    }
    return 0;
}
```

- ▶ What is the difference between the two files above?
- ▶ Why is there such a size difference in the object files

## Answers: Initialized vs Uninitialized Data Matters

- ▶ ELF .data section tracks global variables that is initialized with non-zero values
- ▶ Must record every value in global variable so it can be properly set when loaded to run
- ▶ big\_data.o will have a large .data section as the line  
`long arr[20000] = {1,2,3};`  
initializes the first few array values, rest will be 0

```
> readelf -S big_data.o
```

There are 12 section headers, starting at offset 0x27368:

Section Headers:

[Nr]	Name	Type	Address	Offset
	Size	EntSize	Flags Link Info Align	
...				
[ 3]	.data	PROGBITS	0000000000000000	00000080 <--
----	00000000000027100	0000000000000000	WA 0 0 32	
[ 4]	.bss	NOBITS	0000000000000000	00027180 <--
	0000000000000000	0000000000000000	WA 0 0 1	
...				

- ▶ 0x27100 = 160000 bytes: entire arr array stored in file



## Answers: Initialized vs Uninitialized Data Matters

- ▶ ELF .bss section tracks global variables that are not initialized or initialized to all 0's
- ▶ No specific values need be recorded, just instructions on how much space to allocate on starting the program
- ▶ big\_bss.o will have a miniscule .data section as the line `long arr[20000] = {};` initializes to all 0's so .bss section

```
> readelf -S big_bss.o
```

There are 12 section headers, starting at offset 0x268:

Section Headers:

[Nr]	Name	Type	Address	Offset
	Size	EntSize	Flags Link Info Align	
...				
[ 3]	.data	PROGBITS	0000000000000000	0000007f
	0000000000000000	0000000000000000	WA 0 0 1	
[ 4]	.bss	NOBITS	0000000000000000	00000080 <--
---->	00000000000027100	0000000000000000	WA 0 0 32	
[ 5]	.comment	PROGBITS	0000000000000000	00000080 <--
	00000000000000012	0000000000000001	MS 0 0 1	
...				

- ▶ arr array NOT stored in file, significantly smaller .o file

## Recall: Globals in Assembly

- ▶ Long ago, advised to write following code for global variables  
`movl SOME_GLOBAL_VAR(%rip), %edi`
- ▶ Load is based on an offset from the Instruction Pointer `rip`
- ▶ This kind of code is generated by `gcc` in most cases for globals
- ▶ Similarly, will often see in decompiled code the following

```
> objdump -d thermo_update.o
2f2:  e8 00 00 00 00      callq  2f7 <thermo_update+0x33>
...
31c:  e8 00 00 00 00      callq  321 <thermo_update+0x5d>
```

which looks a little strange

- ▶ Why are both call instructions `e8 00 00 ...`?
- ▶ Both these deserve some explanation

## Relocation and PC-Relative Address

- ▶ Linker merges global symbols from multiple `.o` files into single output sections
  - ▶ Functions into single `.text`
  - ▶ Global vars into `.data` / `.bss` sections
- ▶ Historically, linker would just assign a virtual memory address to each symbol (simple, easy to implement)
- ▶ **Problem:** forces program to be loaded at a fixed virtual memory address, decreases options available to loader/dynamic linker
- ▶ gcc now generates **relocatable** code by default: all instructions must be independent of exact memory position where program is loaded (trickier but flexible/safer)
- ▶ Loader guarantees: **distance between sections is constant**
  - ▶ `.text` might be loaded at `0x9000` or at `0x9100` by OS
  - ▶ `.text` and `.data` always `0x1000` bytes apart
  - ▶ `.text` loaded contiguously at some start address
- ▶ Addressing relative to PC allows flexibility in code placement, requires extra linker work

## Relocation Entries

- ▶ ELF files contain **relocation entries**, spots with unknown address that must be “filled in” at link time
- ▶ Relocation entries are created for **function calls** and **global variable use**
- ▶ Compiler inserts notes about byte locations that require fixes at link time
  - ▶ Position where the fix is needed (“fill this in”)
  - ▶ What symbol is needed
  - ▶ Extra arithmetic stuff
- ▶ Interested in two types of relocation entries
  - ▶ R\_X86\_64\_PC32: insert address of something relative to `rip`; used for global vars, functions in same C file
  - ▶ R\_X86\_64\_PLT32: insert address of a **procedure linkage table entry**; used for functions not in same C file
- ▶ Linker **inserts addresses** at positions indicated by relocation entries

# Example of Relocation Entries

## ORIGINAL SOURCE CODE

```
// file: glob.c
int glob_arr[128];
void glob_func1(int scale){ ... }

void glob_func2(int scale, inty[])
{
    glob_func1(scale);           // 66
    for(int i=0; i<128; i++){
        glob_arr[i] += y[i];     // 83
        printf("%d\n",glob_arr[i]); // e0
    }
}
```

## RELOCATION ENTRIES

```
> readelf -r glob.o
Off Type          Sym + Addend
66  R_X86_64_PC32  glob_func1 - 4
83  R_X86_64_PC32  glob_arr - 4
e0  R_X86_64_PLT32  printf - 4
```

Above byte positions must have addresses inserted by the linker at link time. Currently those position have 00's as placeholders until the linker fills them in.

## RELEVANT DISASSEMBLED CODE

```
> objdump -dx glob.o
0000000000000051 <glob_func2>:
   65:  e8 00 00 00 00      callq  6a          # call function
           ^^ 66: R_X86_64_PC32      glob_func1-0x4     # in same file

   80:  48 8d 05 00 00 00 00  lea     0x0(%rip),%rax # use global var
           ^^ 83: R_X86_64_PC32      glob_arr-0x4       # in same file

   df:  e8 00 00 00 00      callq  e4          # call function
           ^^ e0: R_X86_64_PLT32      printf-0x4        # in another file
```

## End Result: Relocatable Code

- ▶ Most ELF programs have **no load time constant addresses**
- ▶ All functions and variables (locals/globals) are referenced relative to the `rip` (program counter)
- ▶ ELF image can be loaded at an starting Virtual Memory Address and run successfully
- ▶ Will notice memory address of functions/variables change from run to run but the **difference between locations is constant**

```
> gcc -o glob_main glob_main.c glob.c
```

```
> ./glob_main
```

```
ADDRESSES
```

```
0x5637e3bc6060: glob_arr variable
```

```
0x5637e3bc3159: main func
```

```
0x5637e3bc32aa: glob_func1
```

```
0x5637e3bc32fa: glob_func2
```

```
ADDRESS DIFFERENCES
```

```
2f07: glob_arr - main
```

```
2db6: glob_arr - glob_func1
```

```
151: glob_func1 - main
```

```
50: glob_func2 - glob_func1
```

```
> ./glob_main
```

```
ADDRESSES
```

```
0x5642d3feb060: glob_arr variable
```

```
0x5642d3fe8159: main func
```

```
0x5642d3fe82aa: glob_func1
```

```
0x5642d3fe82fa: glob_func2
```

```
ADDRESS DIFFERENCES
```

```
2f07: glob_arr - main
```

```
2db6: glob_arr - glob_func1
```

```
151: glob_func1 - main
```

```
50: glob_func2 - glob_func1
```

# Wait, what about that PLT thing?

- ▶ Minor performance hit for dynamically linked libraries, use of program linkage table (PLT) and global offset table (GOT)
- ▶ First call to `printf()` is expensive when it is dynamically linked
- ▶ Dynamic linker delays determining address of `printf()` until it is called
- ▶ Pseudo-code representing gcc / Linux approach to the right: clever use of 1 level of indirection and GOT table of function pointers

```
void main(){
    ...
    printf(...); // compiled to call_printf()
    ...
}

void *GOT[];    // has addresses of funcs

void call_printf(...){
    int (*func_ptr) = GOT[3]; // get func ptr
    func_ptr(...);           // call func
}

void link_printf(...){ // 1st call only
    void *printf_addr = // use linker to
        dlsym("printf"); // find printf
    GOT[3] = printf_addr; // save ptr later
    printf_addr(...);     // call printf
}

void *GOT[] = { // global table
    ...
    &link_printf, // for first printf call
    ..
}
```