
OWASP 2023
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OCT 30-NOV 3
Using WebAssembly to run, extend, and secure your application
Niels Tanis
Security Researcher

Who am I?

- Niels Tanis
- Sr. Principal Security Researcher
  - Background .NET Development, Pentesting/ethical hacking, and software security consultancy
  - Research on static analysis for .NET apps
  - Enjoying Rust!
- Microsoft MVP – Developer Technologies

VERACODE

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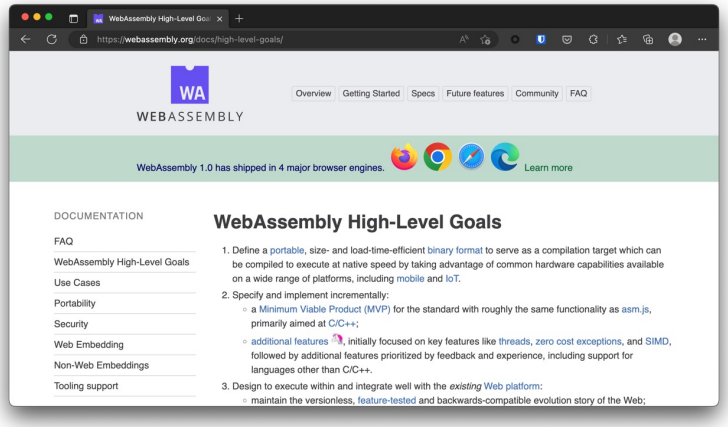
WebAssembly



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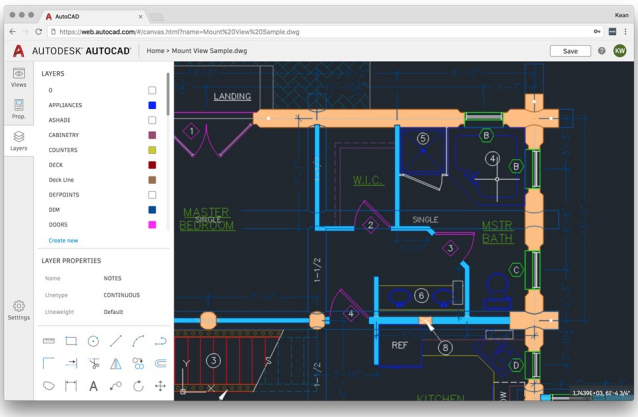
https://hacks.mozilla.org/files/2019/08/04-01-star-diagram.png

WebAssembly - AutoCAD



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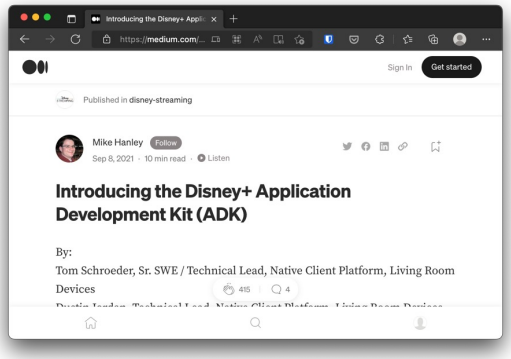
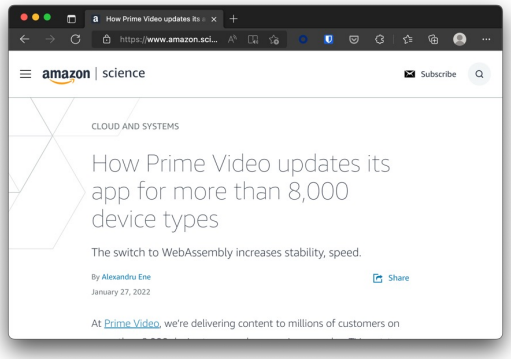
WebAssembly - SDK's





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https://medium.com/disney-streaming/introducing-the-disney-application-development-kit-adk-ad85ca139073
https://www.amazon.science/blog/how-prime-video-updates-its-app-for-more-than-8-000-device-types

Agenda

- Introduction
- WebAssembly 101
- Using WebAssembly to …
  - … run your application
  - … extend your application
  - .. secure your application
- Conclusion
- Q&A

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WebAssembly Design

- **Be fast, efficient, and portable**
  - Executed in near-native speed across different platforms
- **Be readable and debuggable**
  - In low-level bytecode but also human readable
- **Keep secure**
  - Run on sandboxed execution environment
- **Don't break the web**
  - Ensure backwards compatibility

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WebAssembly

- Binary instruction format for stack-based virtual machine similar to .NET CLR running MSIL or JVM running bytecode
- Designed as a portable compilation target
- The security model of WebAssembly:
  - Protect users from buggy or malicious modules
  - Provide developers with useful primitives and mitigations for developing safe applications

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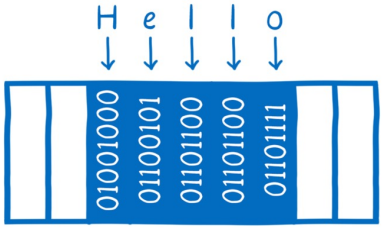
https://hacks.mozilla.org/2017/02/creating-and-working-with-webassembly-modules/
https://webassembly.org/

WebAssembly Memory

- Isolated per WASM module
- A contiguous, mutable array of uninterpreted bytes



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WebAssembly Control-Flow Integrity

```
int number = Convert.ToInt32(Console.ReadLine());
Console.WriteLine($"Number {number}");
if (number>5)
{
	Console.WriteLine("Number is larger than 5");
}
else
{
	Console.WriteLine("Number is smaller than 5");
}
Console.WriteLine("Done!");
```

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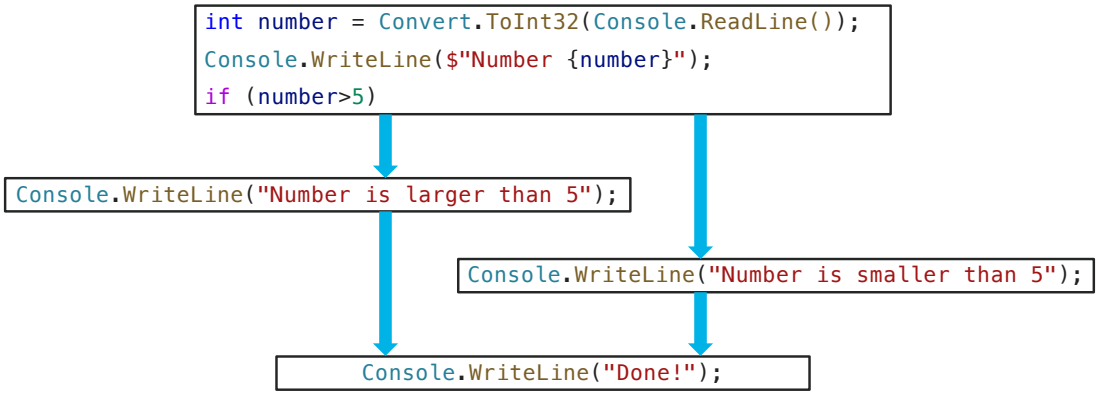
WebAssembly Control-Flow Integrity



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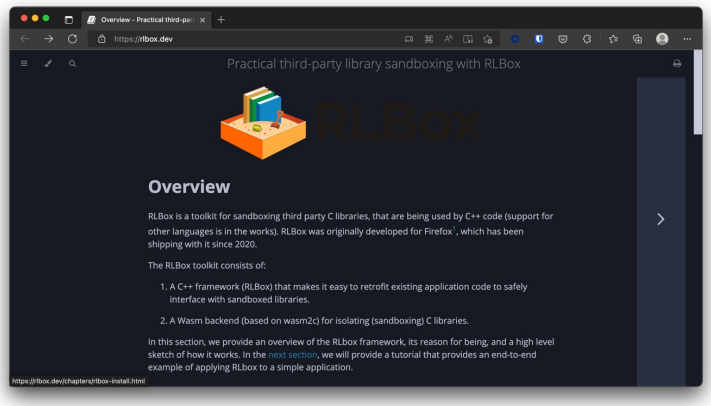
FireFox RLBox



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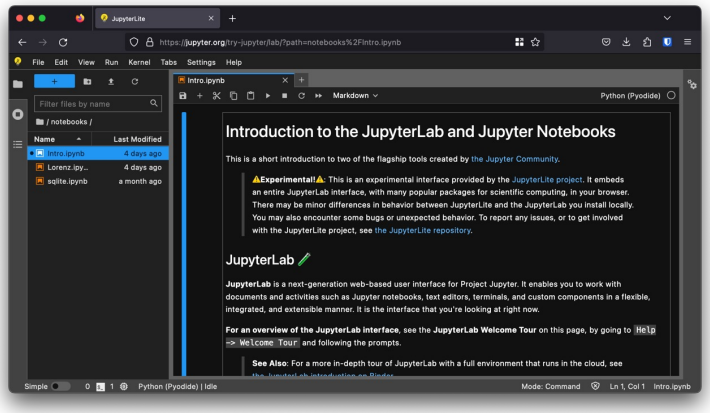
https://rlbox.dev/
https://hacks.mozilla.org/2020/02/securing-firefox-with-webassembly/

Python on WASM



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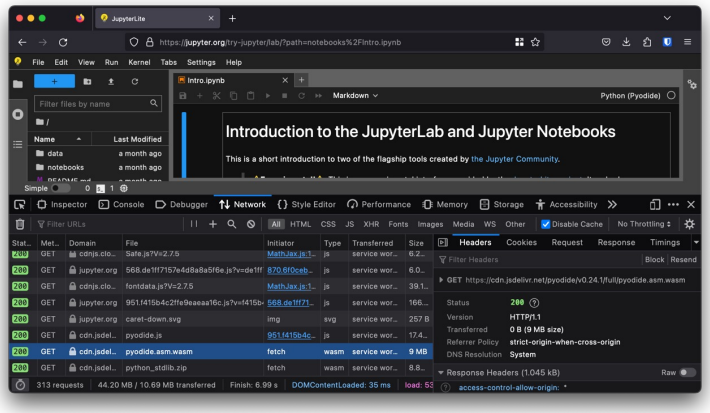
Python on WASM



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Running .NET on WebAssembly

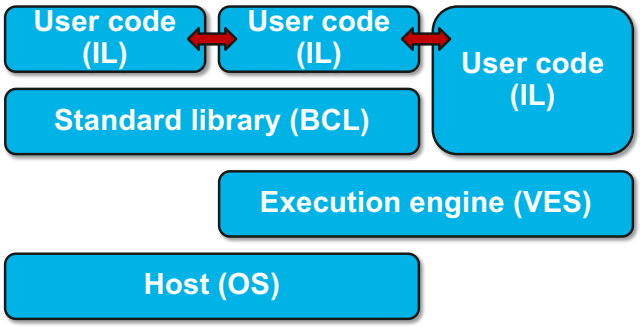

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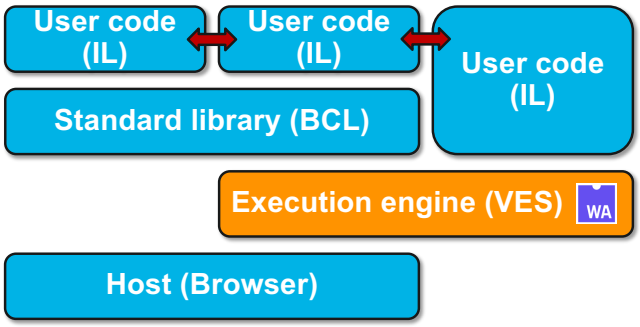
Diagram: https://github.com/itowlson/wasmday22/blob/main/slides/Wasm%20Interfaces%20and%20.NET.pptx

Running .NET on WebAssembly



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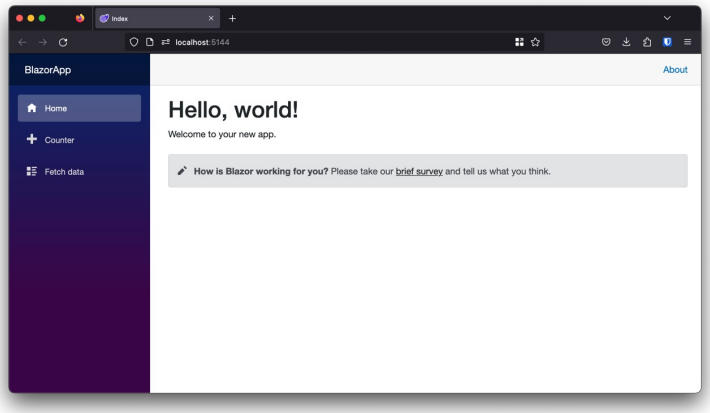
Blazor WebAssembly



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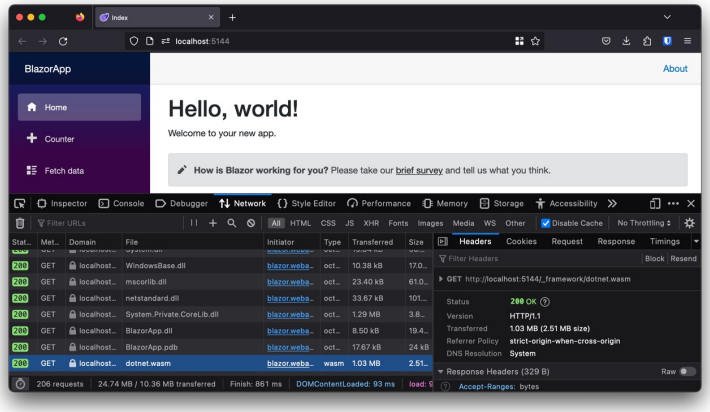
Blazor WebAssembly



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Running .NET on WebAssembly

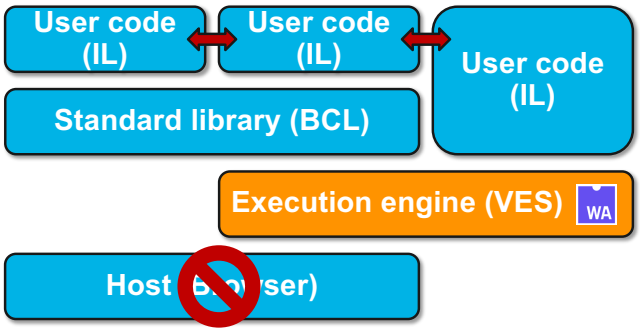

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Diagram: https://github.com/itowlson/wasmday22/blob/main/slides/Wasm%20Interfaces%20and%20.NET.pptx

WebAssembly System Interface WASI

- Introduced in March 2019 by Bytecode Alliance
- WasmTime implementation as reference
- POSIX inspired, engine-independent, non-Web system-oriented API for WebAssembly

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WebAssembly System Interface WASI

- Strong sandbox with Capability Based Security
- Right now, supports e.g. FileSystem actions
- Future support for sockets and other system resources.
- Anyone familiar with .NET Standard? ☺

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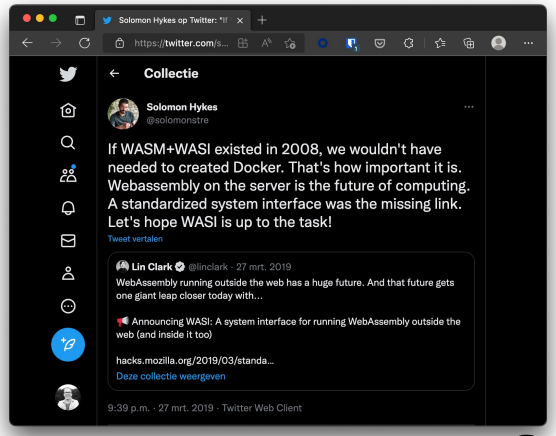
Docker vs WASM & WASI



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Docker vs WASM & WASI

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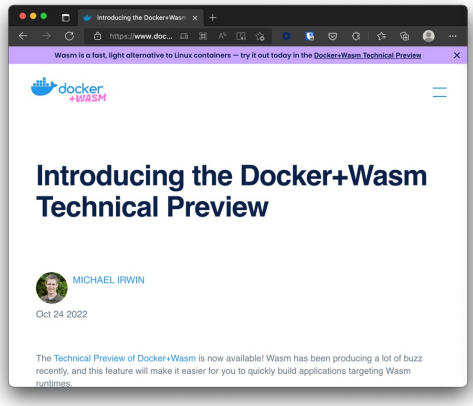
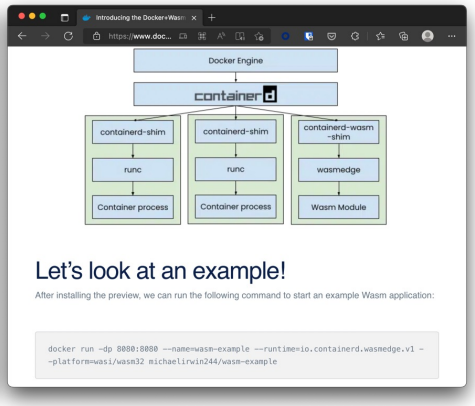
Docker & WASM





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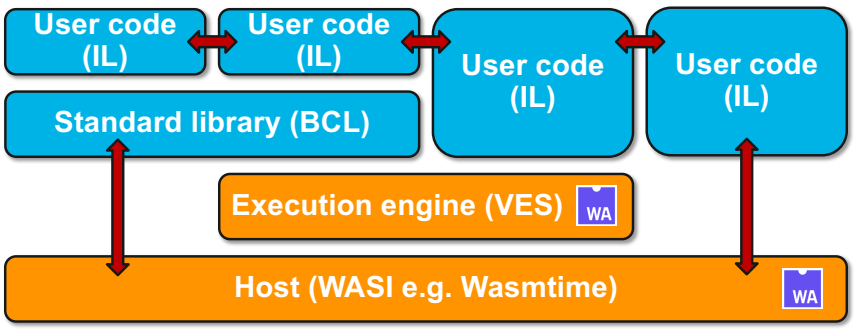
WebAssembly System Interface WASI



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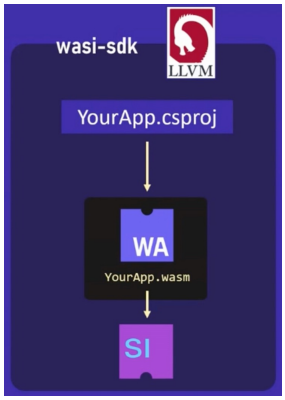
Experimental WASI SDK for .NET



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https://github.com/SteveSandersonMS/dotnet-wasi-sdk

Extending .NET with WASM

- WasmTime.NET NuGet package
- Can run WASM inside of any .NET application
- Extend with Rust based WASM module
- Limit capabilities
- Demo time!

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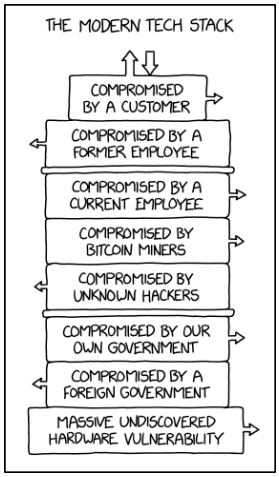
Trusted Computing – XKCD 2166



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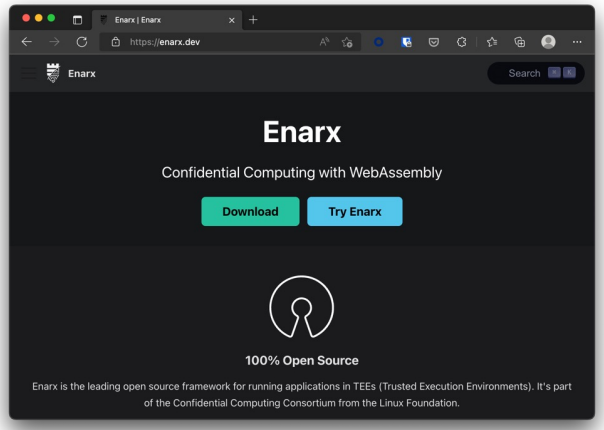
https://xkcd.com/2166/

Enarx



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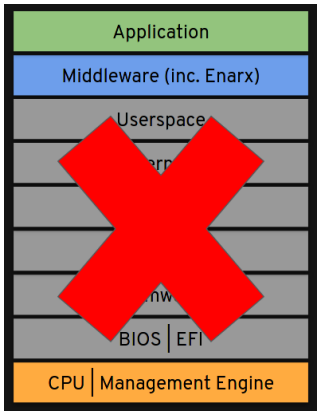
https://enarx.dev/

Enarx Threat Model

- Don’t trust the host
- Don’t trust the host owner
- Don’t trust the host operator
- Hardware cryptographically verified
- Software audited and cryptographically verified



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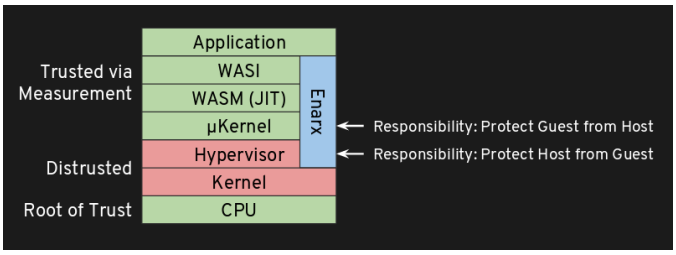
Enarx

- Leverages Trusted Execution Environment (TEE) direct on processor
  - AMD's SEV, Intel's SGX and IBM's PEF
- Attestation of hardware and Enarx runtime



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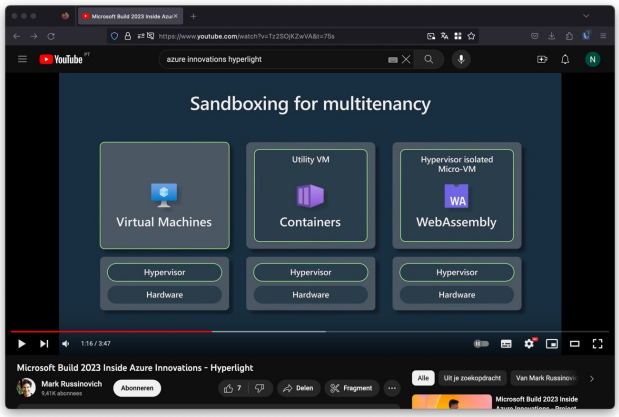
Project Hyperlight



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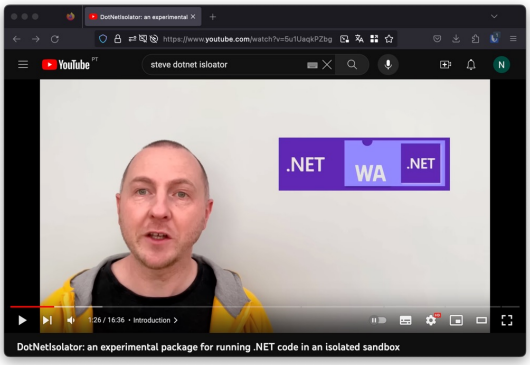
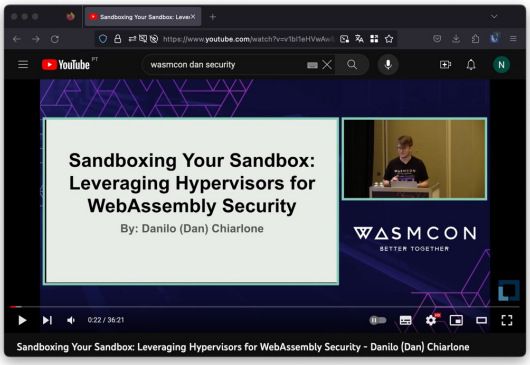
DotNetIsolator & Project Hyperlight





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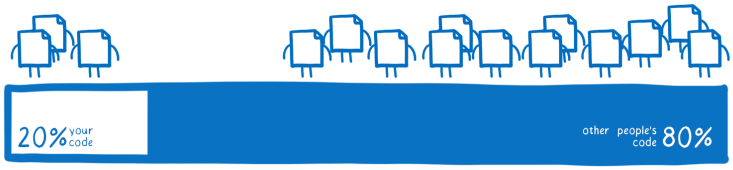
WASM – What's next?

composition of an average code base



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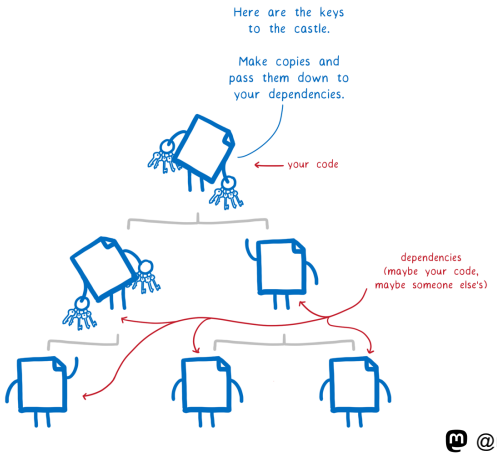
Dependencies



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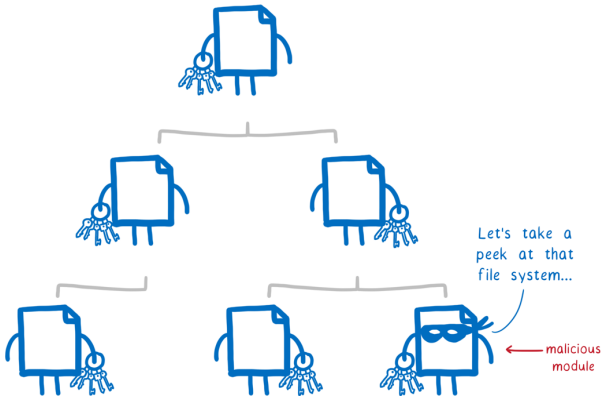
Malicious module



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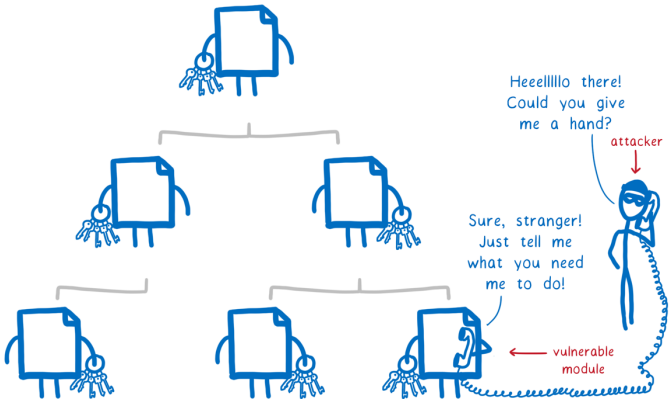
Vulnerable module



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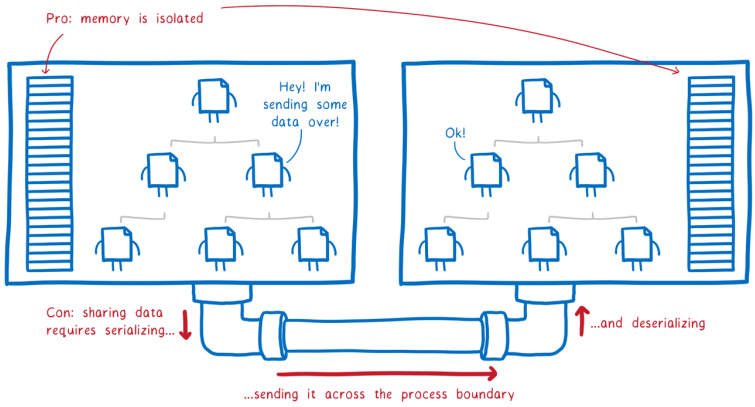
Process Isolation



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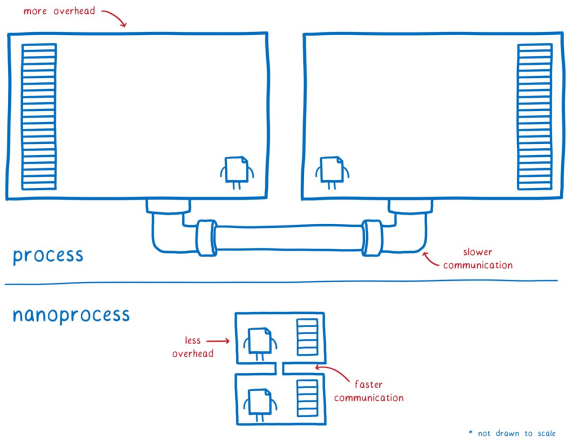
WebAssembly Nano-Process



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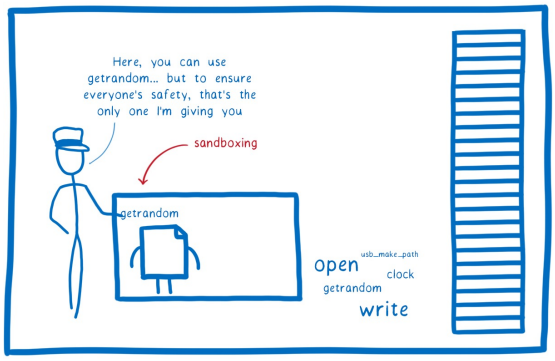
WebAssembly Nano-Process

1. Sandboxing



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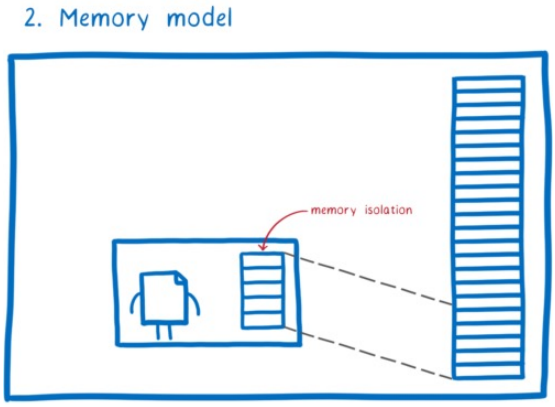
WebAssembly Nano-Process



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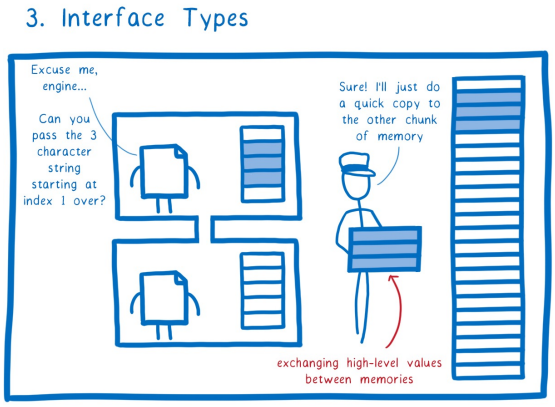
WebAssembly Nano-Process



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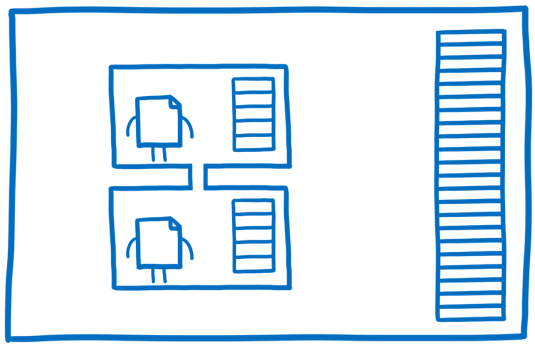
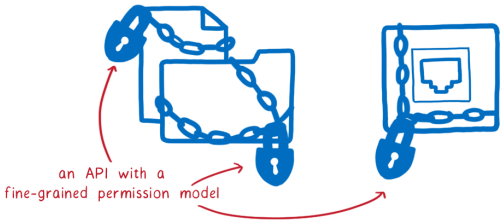
WebAssembly Nano-Process

4. WebAssembly System Interface





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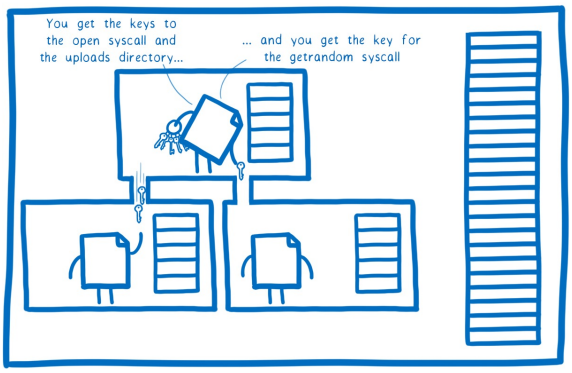
WebAssembly Nano-Process

5. The missing link



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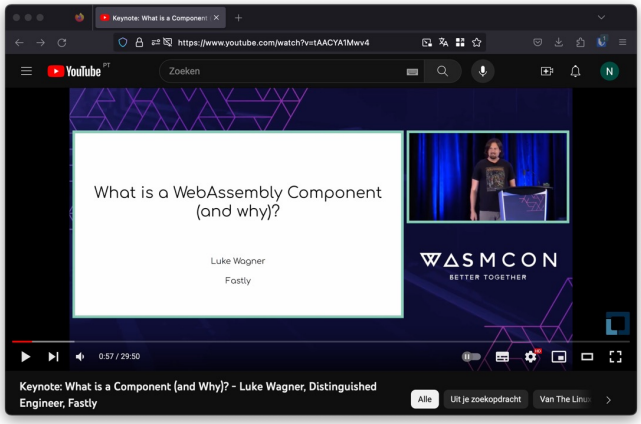
WebAssembly Component Model



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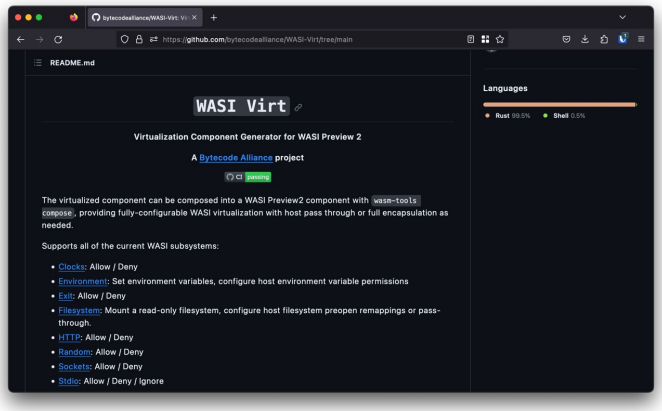
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAACYA1Mwv4

WebAssembly Component Model



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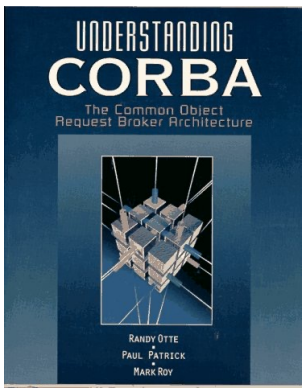
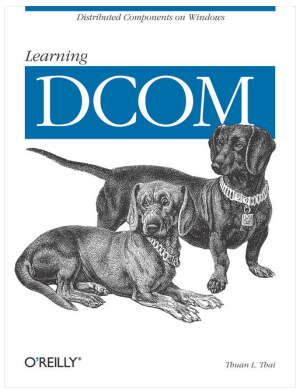
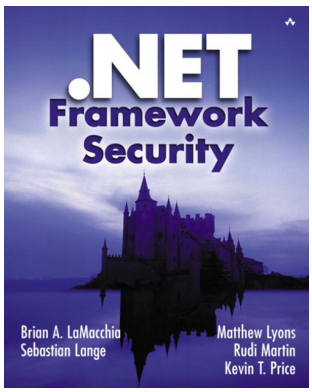
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAACYA1Mwv4

Have we seen this before?







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Runtimes and Security

- Most security research published focusses on correctness of WASM runtimes/VM's based on e.g. fuzzing

- Bytecode Alliance Blogpost September 2022 by Nick Fitzgerald:
  - "Security and Correctness in Wasmtime"
  - Written in Rust → Using all it's LangSec features
  - Continues Fuzzing & formal verification
  - Security process & vulnerability disclosure

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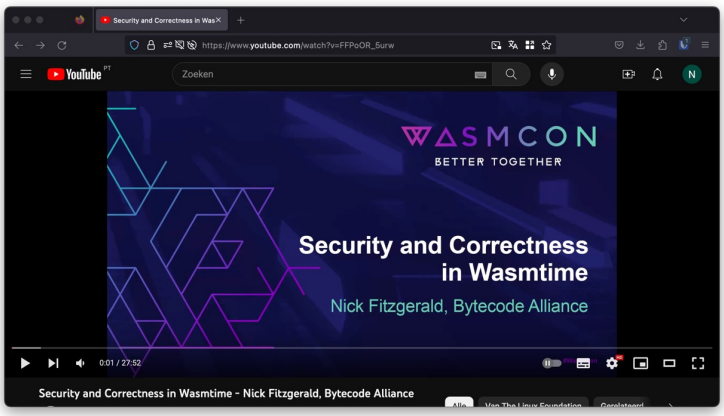
https://bytecodealliance.org/articles/security-and-correctness-in-wasmtime

Runtimes and Security



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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFPoOR_5urw

Conclusion

- Cloud Native ❤️ WebAssembly
- WebAssembly has a lot of potential to be used to run, extend, and secure your applications
- Its as secure as the WebAssembly runtime implementation!
- I like top-down approach Bytecode Alliance is taking in moving forward, feedback will change/influence

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Questions?

- https://github.com/nielstanis/appsecdc2023
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- @nielstanis@infosec.exchange
- https://blog.fennec.dev
- Thank you!


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