

CSCI 476: Computer Security

Threat Modeling, Lessons Learned, Review

Reese Pearsall
Fall 2023

Announcements

Lab 9 due Sunday **12/10**

Fill out the course evaluation (Extra Credit)

Final Exam

Thursday December 14th 2:00 – 3:50 in Romney 315

Please be there

students after
completing CSCI 476



If you are taking the exam at the testing center, make sure you schedule it before friday



Meatball wishes you good luck on your final exams

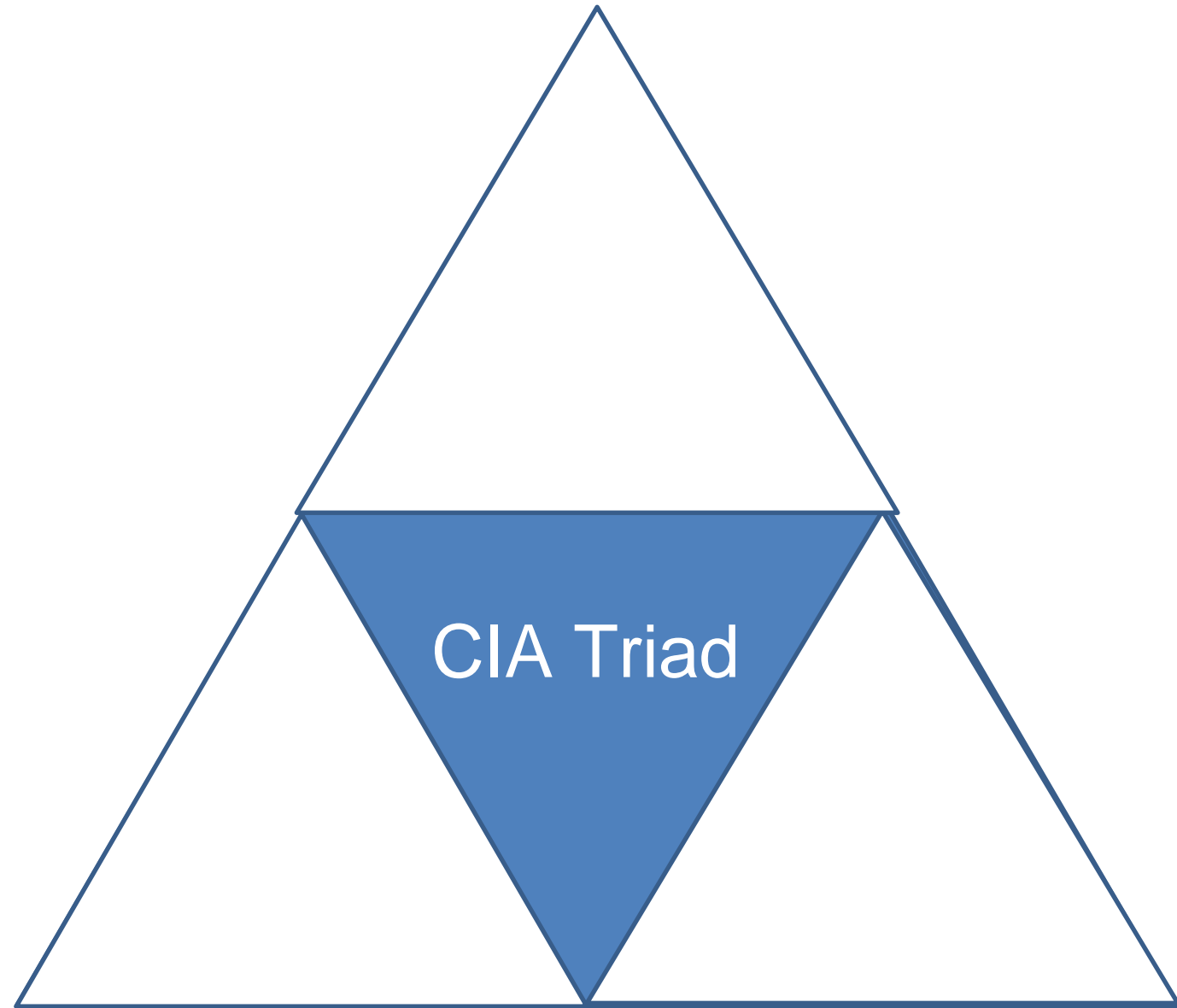
EXTRA CREDIT





Security Basics

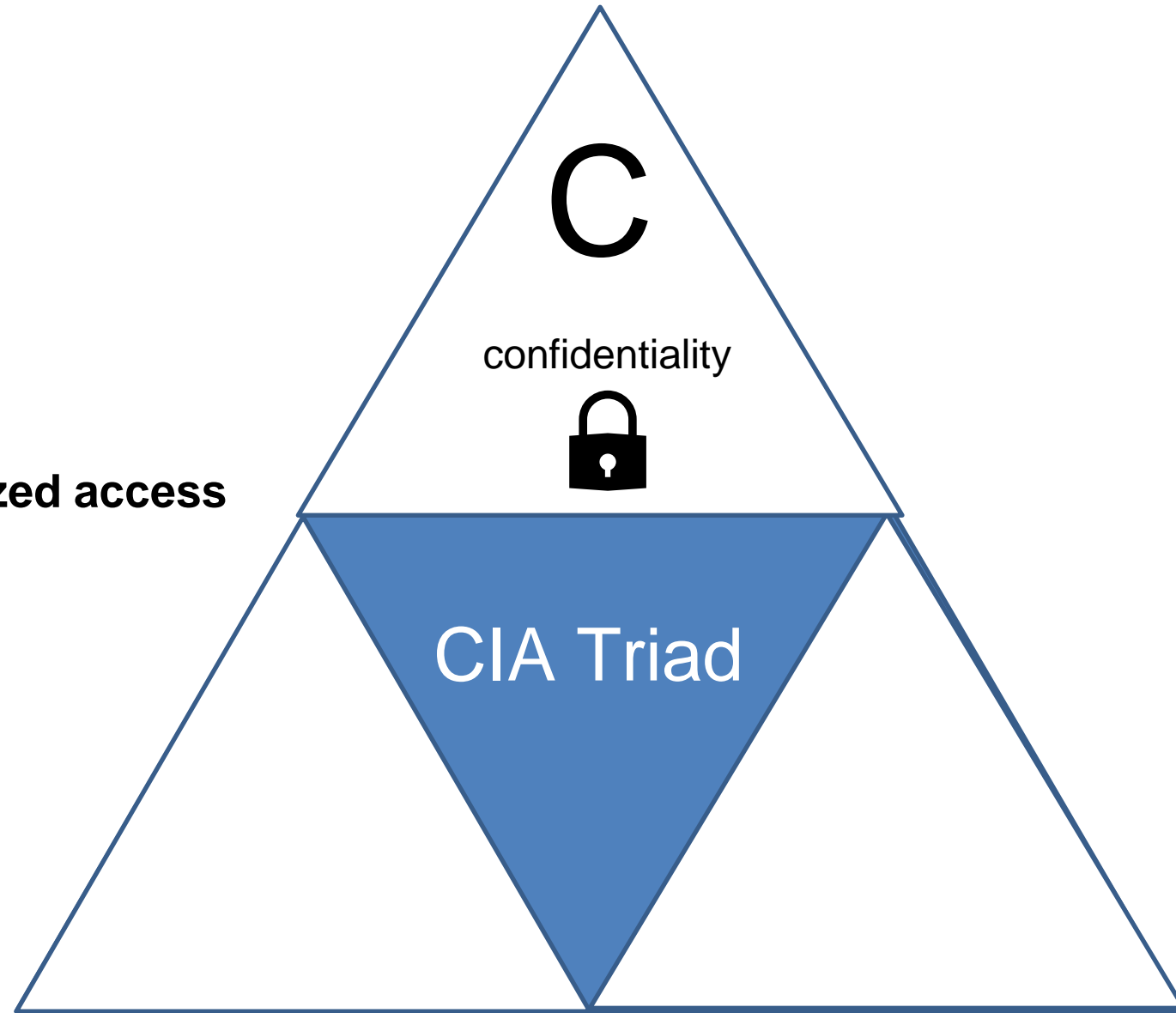
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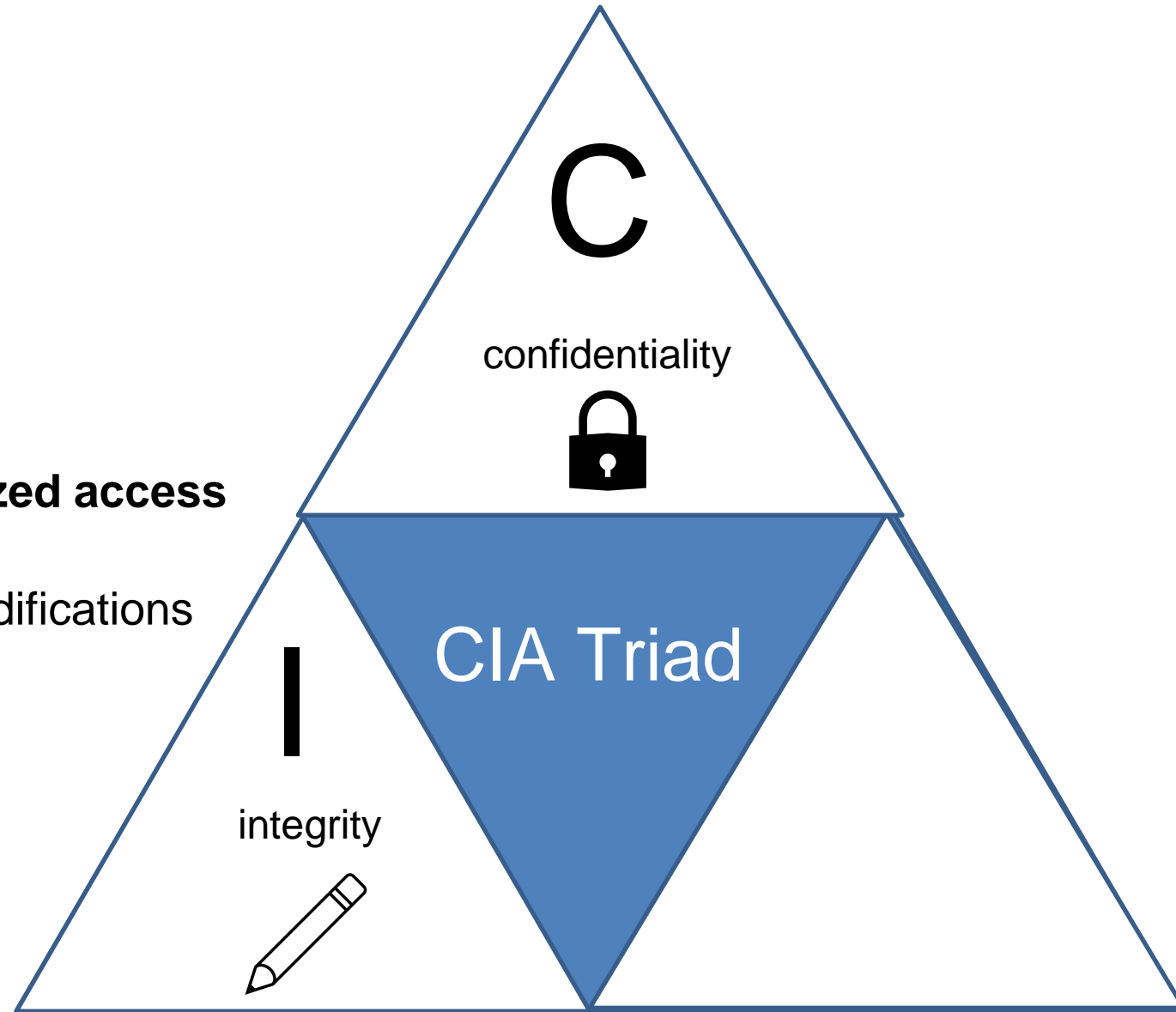


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Integrity- protection from unauthorized modifications



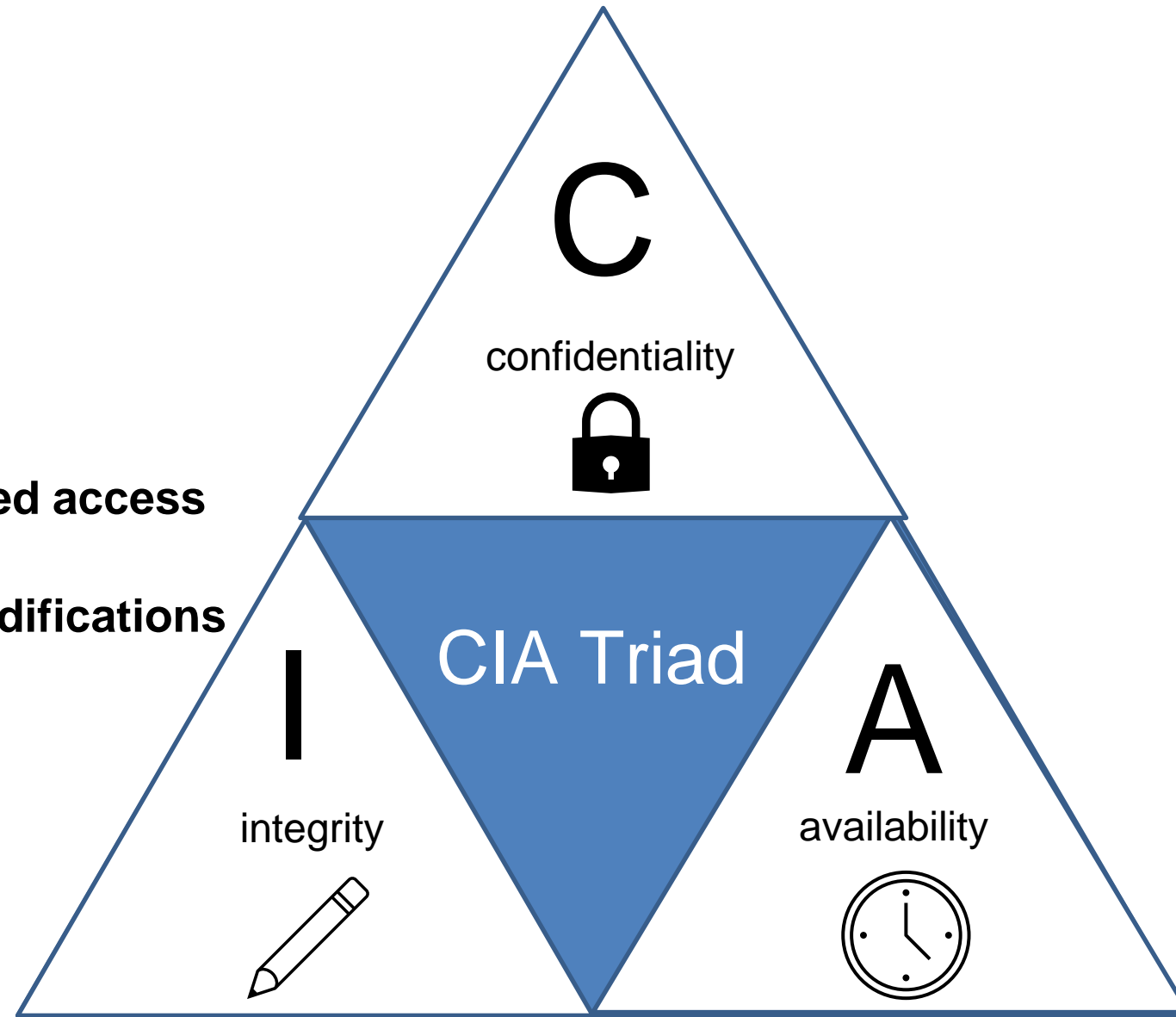
Security Basics

The **CIA Triad** is a widely accepted model for evaluating the security of a system. Consists of three important principles

Confidentiality- protection from **unauthorized access**

Integrity- protection from **unauthorized modifications**

Availability- protection from **interruption**



Common Threats & Attack Vectors

Denial of Service (DoS / DDos)- attack with intent to shut down a machine or network

- Violates the **availability** property

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Information Leakage / Data Corruption- unauthorized or accidental reveal of sensitive information

- Violates the **confidentiality** property
- Violates the **integrity** property

Privilege Escalation- gaining illicit permissions beyond what is intended for that user

- Violates the **confidentiality** property
- Violates the **integrity** property

Defense Mechanisms

- Countermeasures (ASLR, SYN Cookies, etc)
- Software testing
- Formal verification
- Refactoring software and safe coding practices

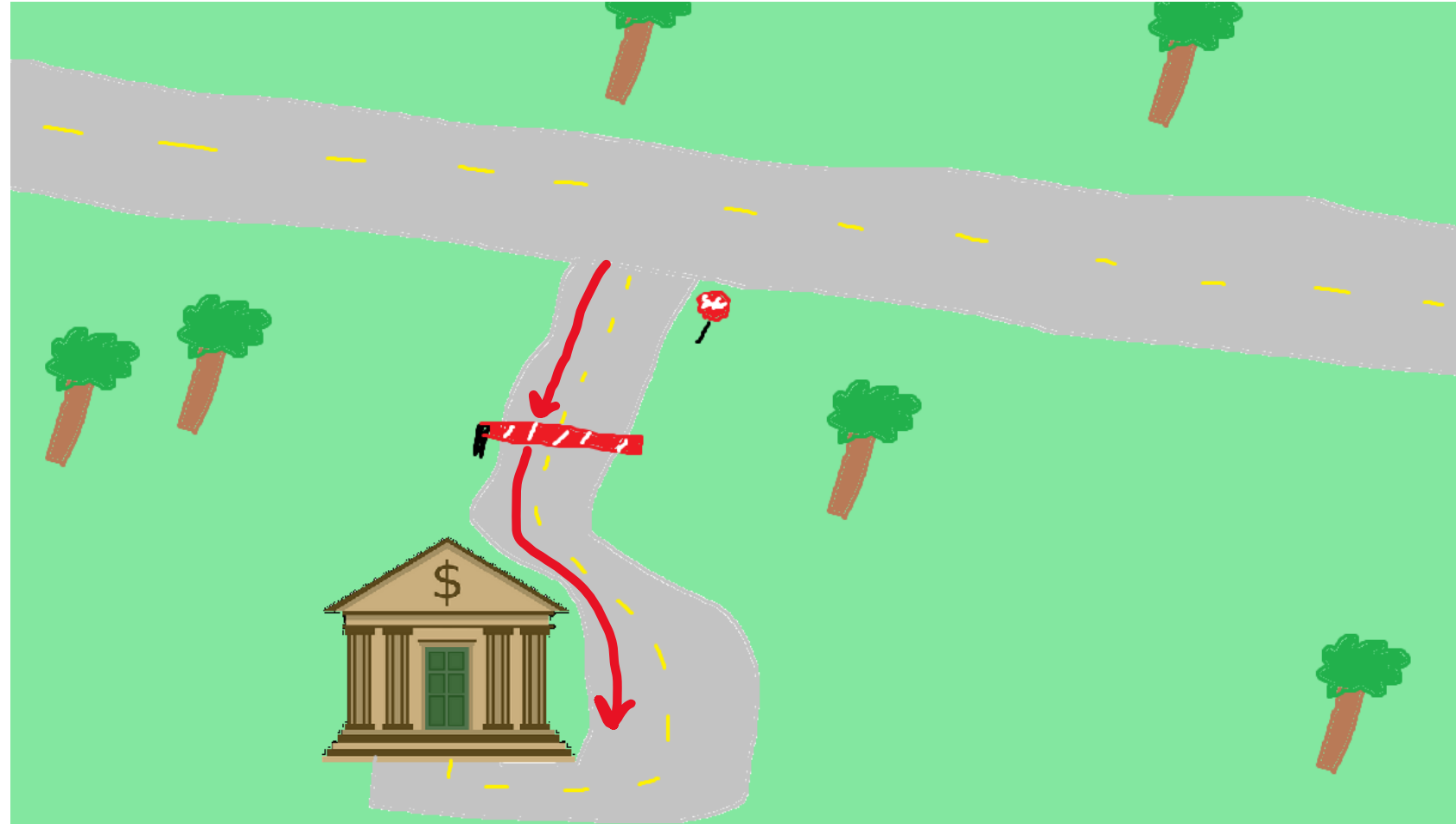


Threat Modeling

NEED: a consistent and structured approach for defense and assessing risk

Assessing Risk

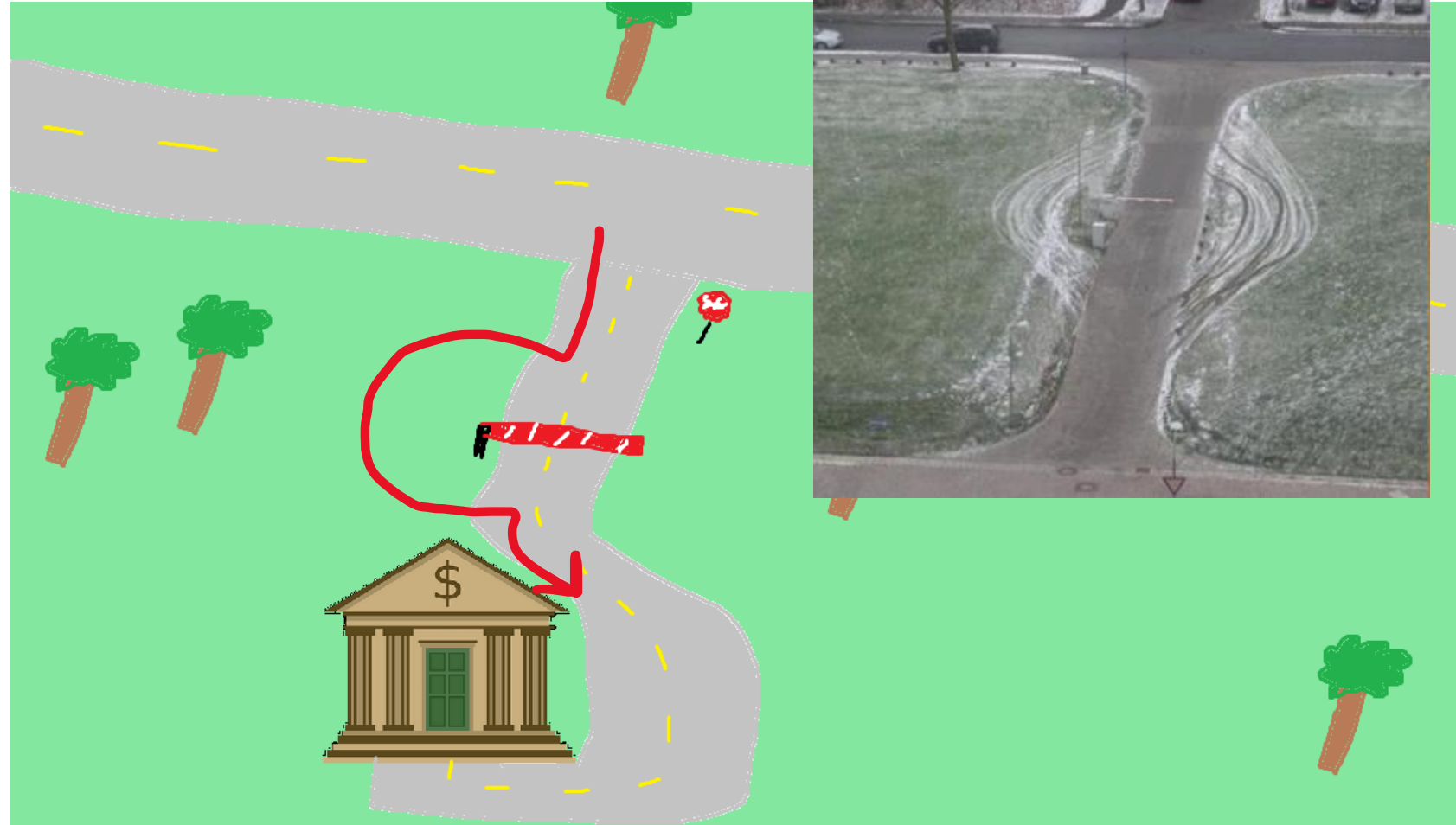
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When someone interacts with our system in a way that we did not intend... it could have harmful consequences



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We might expect a user to input a valid username and password when they attempt to log in

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LOGIN SUCCESS

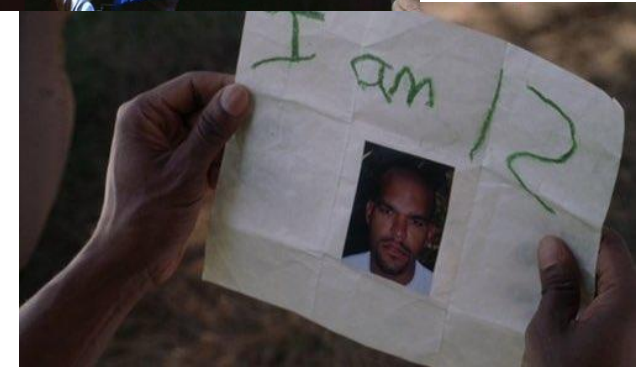
Who do we trust?



Are they honest? Are they reliable? Are they dependable? What are their intentions?

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Trust as little as possible

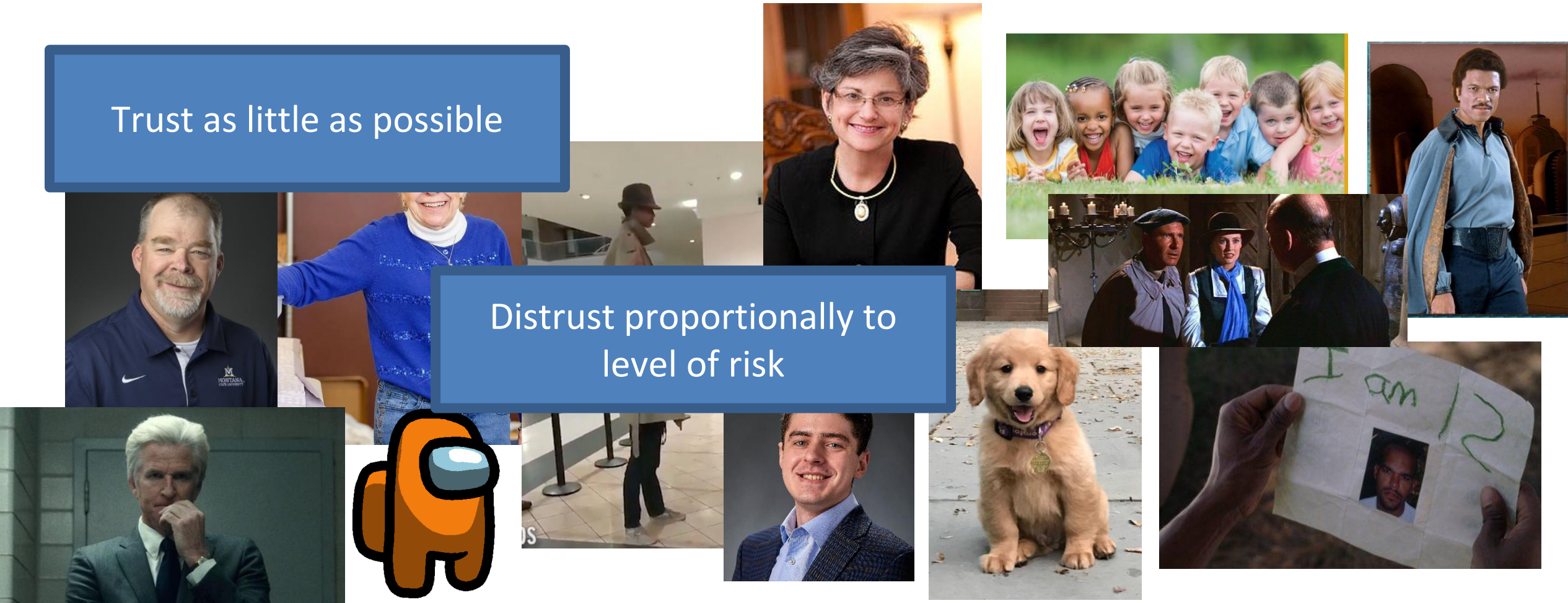


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Distrust proportionally to
level of risk



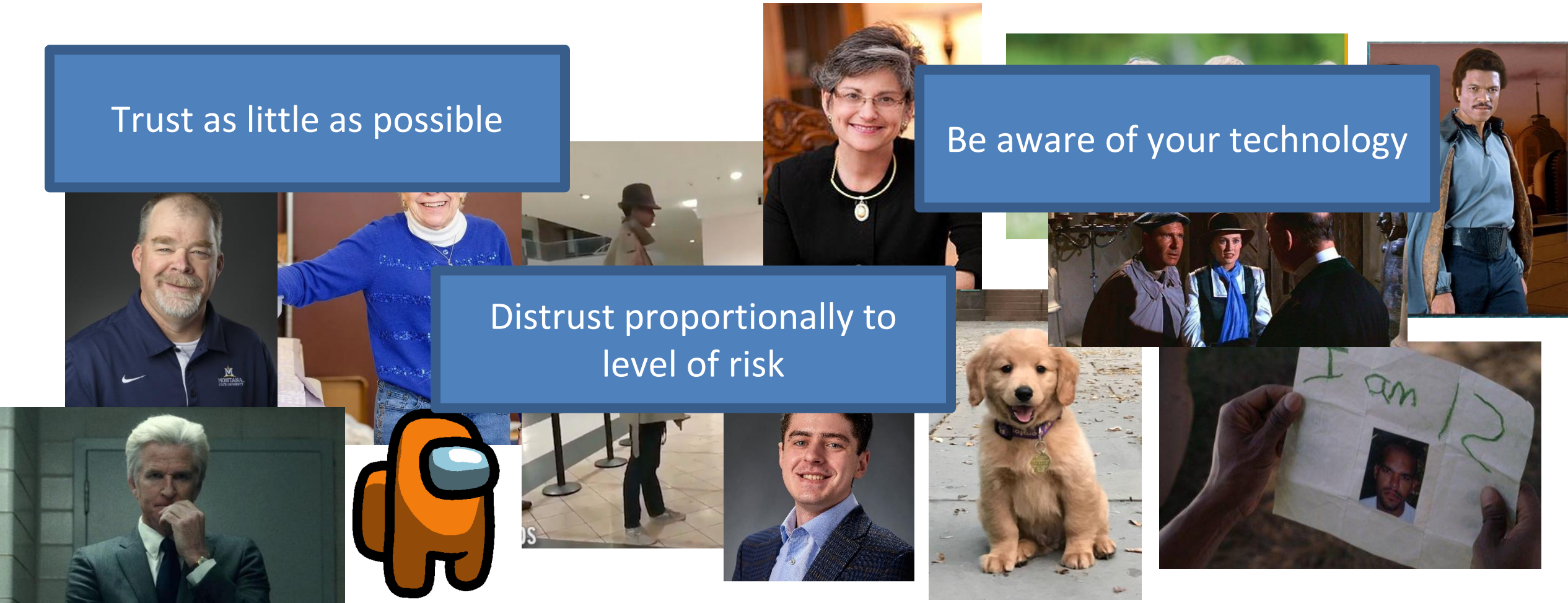
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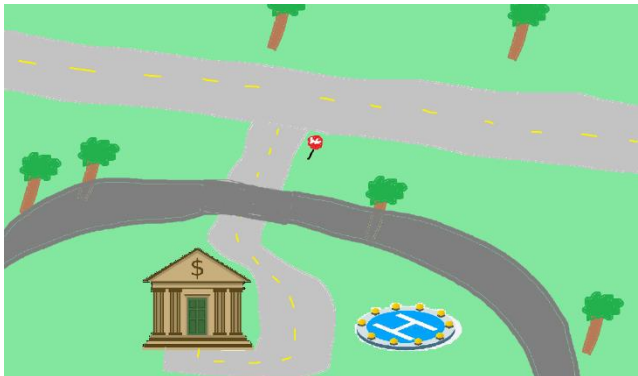
Be aware of your technology

Distrust proportionally to
level of risk



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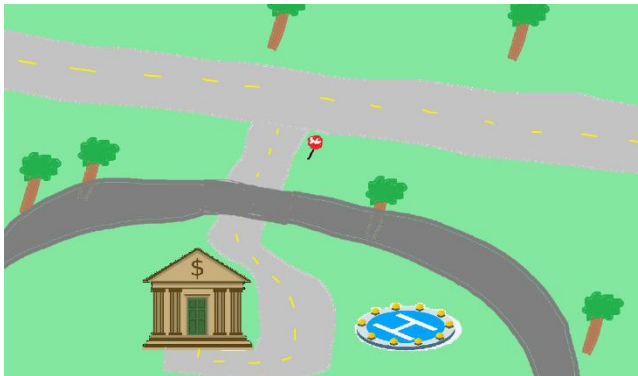
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- New assets



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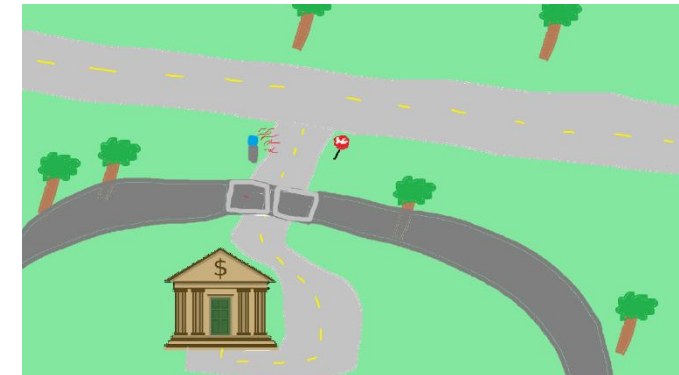
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Perfect security is impossible



- New **assets**
- New **threats**
- New **capabilities**



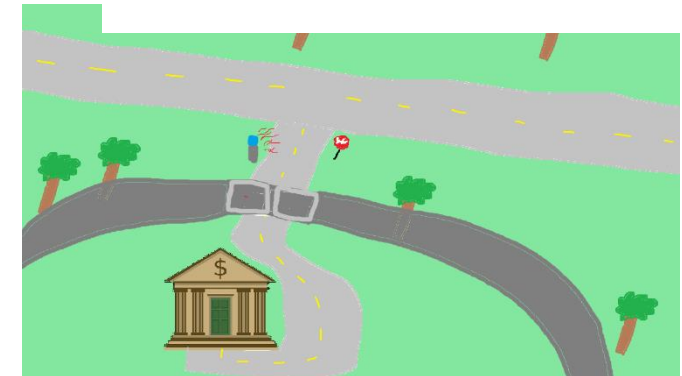
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They fly now? They fly now



Perfect security is impossible

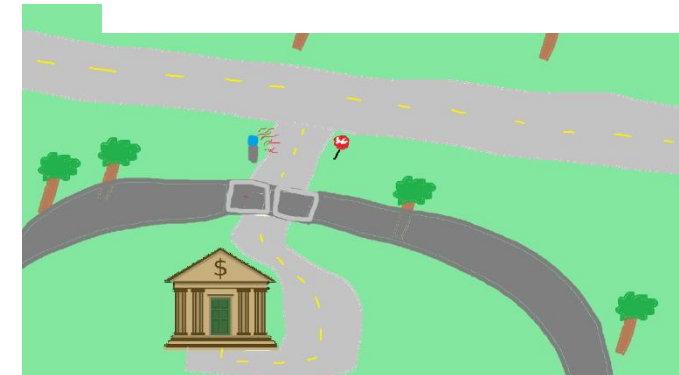


- New **assets**
- New **threats**
- New **capabilities**
- New **technology**



They fly now? They fly now

My goal is to teach you important cybersecurity principles that are universal across any system



NEWS 25 OCT 2023

Winter Vivern: Zero-Day XSS Exploit Targets Roundcube Servers

Heap-based Buffer Overflow Flaw in cURL Library Using SOCKS5 Proxy

By Eswar - October 12, 2023

AIOS WordPress Plugin Faces Backlash for Storing User Passwords in Plaintext

Jul 14, 2023 Newsroom

Password Security / WordPress

Cloudflare website downed by DDoS attack claimed by Anonymous Sudan

Threat Modeling

You develop a threat model by focusing on five key questions

1. What are you building?
2. What are the assets?
3. What can go wrong? What are the threats?
4. What mechanisms can we implement to prevent things from going wrong?
5. Did you do a decent job of analysis?

Threat Modeling

Brainstorming

1. **Free-form brainstorming-** gather around a whiteboard; enumerate threats/possible defenses
2. **Scenario Analysis-** Propose a scenario and ask “what might go wrong?”
3. **Pre-Mortem-** Assuming a failure or compromise, what do you do next?
4. **Movie plotting** – Pick outrageous ideas; what happens next?
5. **Literature review-** study systems that are similar to yours

Threat Modeling Practice

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Let's develop a threat model

You are at a bar, and you hand your phone to a cute person ...

Threat Modeling Practice

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Structured Approaches

WE NEED STRUCTURE

- Attack Lists & Libraries (ie. Common and Current vulnerabilities)

There is no “right” choice

Structured Approaches

On the final lab, you will need to use the knowledge you've learned in this class to develop a threat model for some kind of software system

- Attack Lists & Libraries (ie. Common and Current vulnerabilities)

There is no “right” choice

Structured Approaches

- **Asset-centric:** focus on things of value: things attack want; things you want to protect
- **Attacker-centric:** focus on attackers/archetypes/personas and their capabilities
- **Software-centric:** focus of SW; most SW is backed by structured models (CFG, State diagrams, etc)

Methodologies

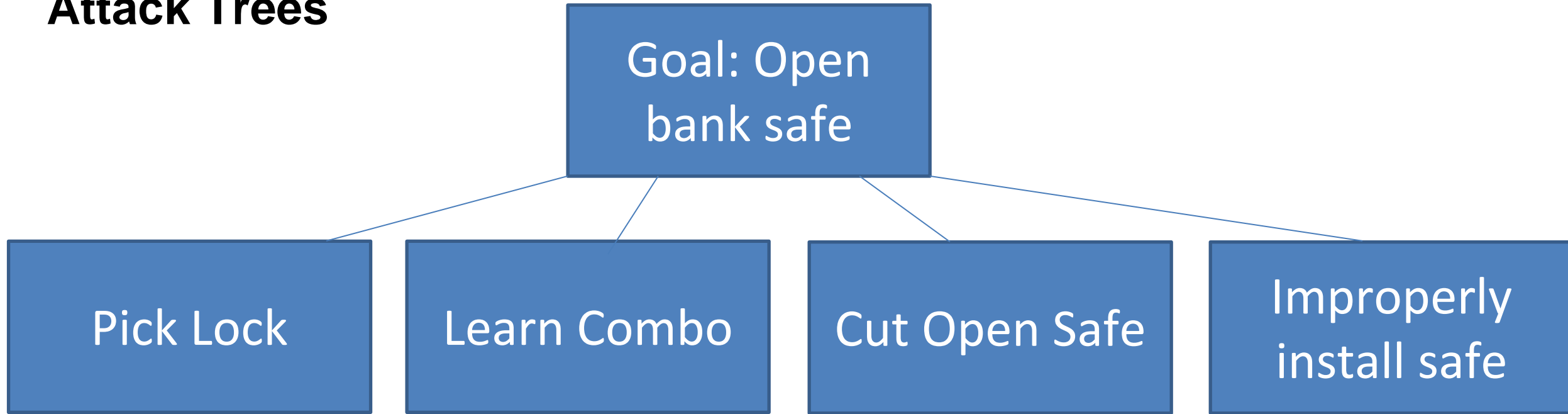
- STRIDE
 - **S**poofing, **T**ampering, **R**epudiation, **I**nfо Disclosure, **D**enial of Service, **E**levation of Privilege
<https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/security/develop/threat-modeling-tool-threats>
- Attack Trees
- Attack Lists & Libraries (ie. Common and Current vulnerabilities)

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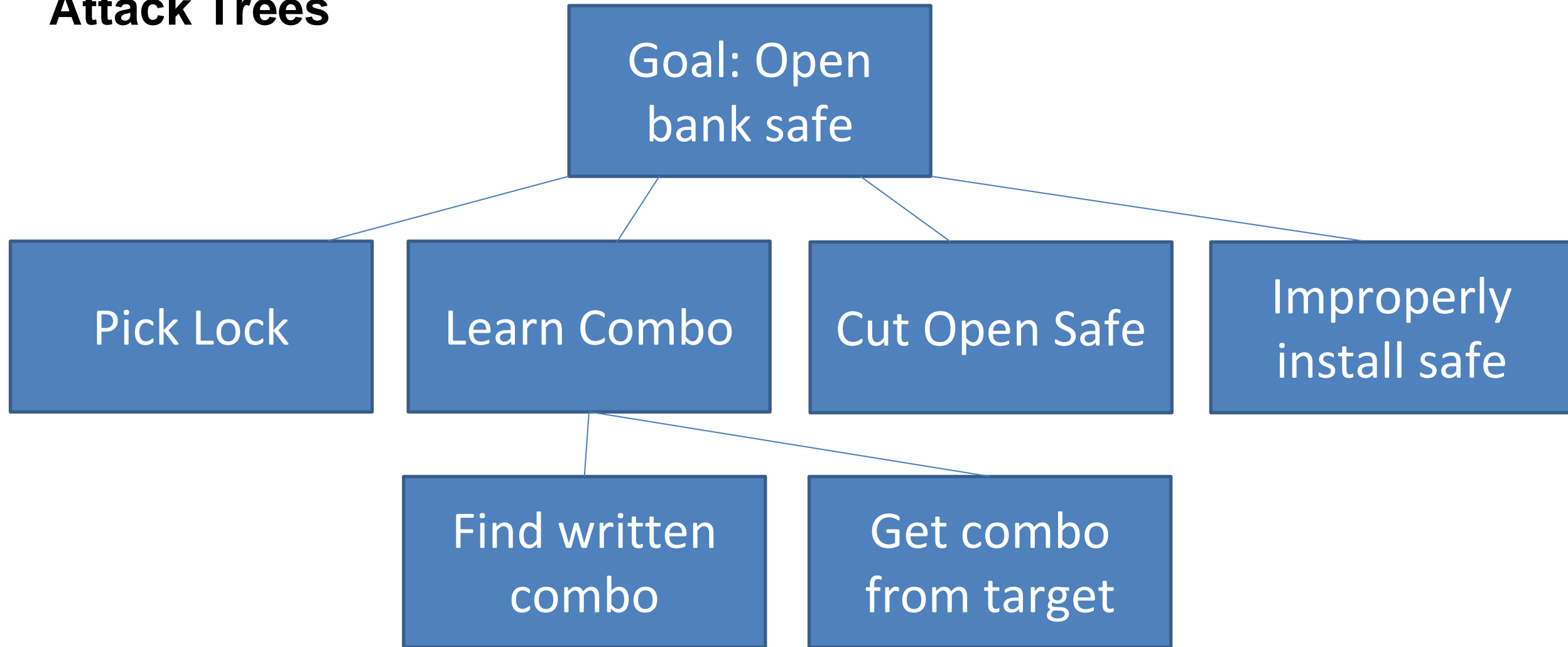
Attack Trees

Goal: Open
bank safe

Attack Trees

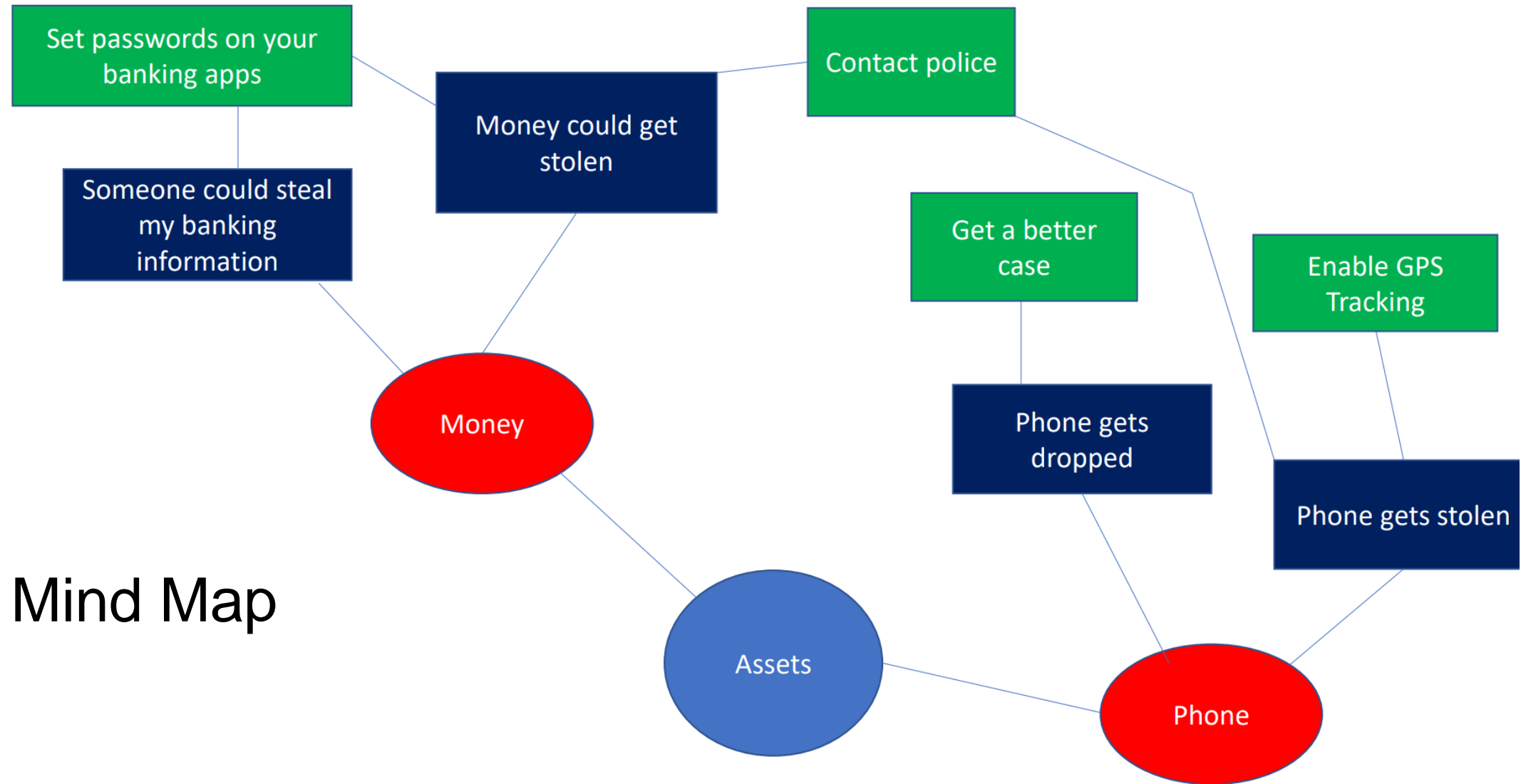


Attack Trees

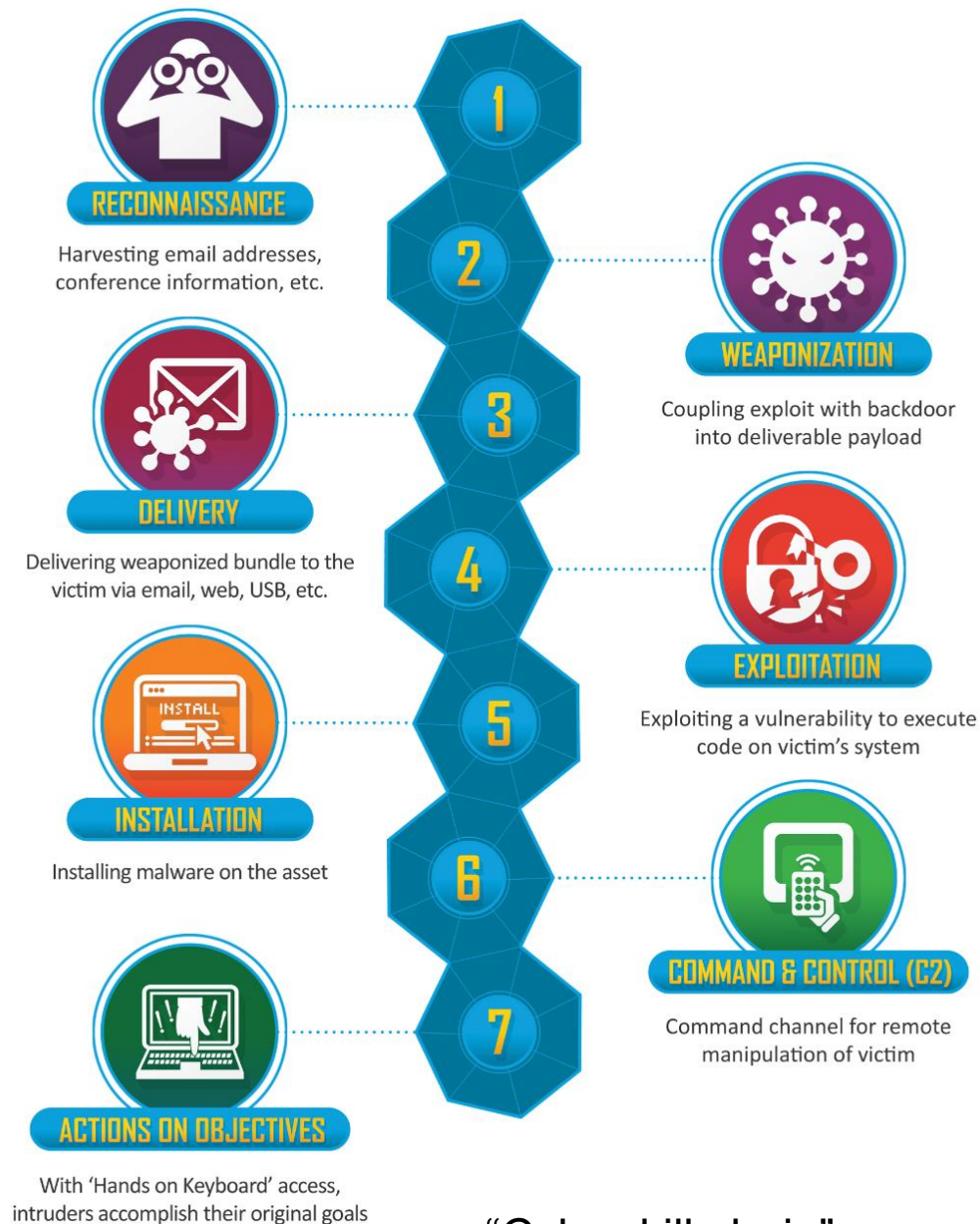


Attack Trees





Mind Map

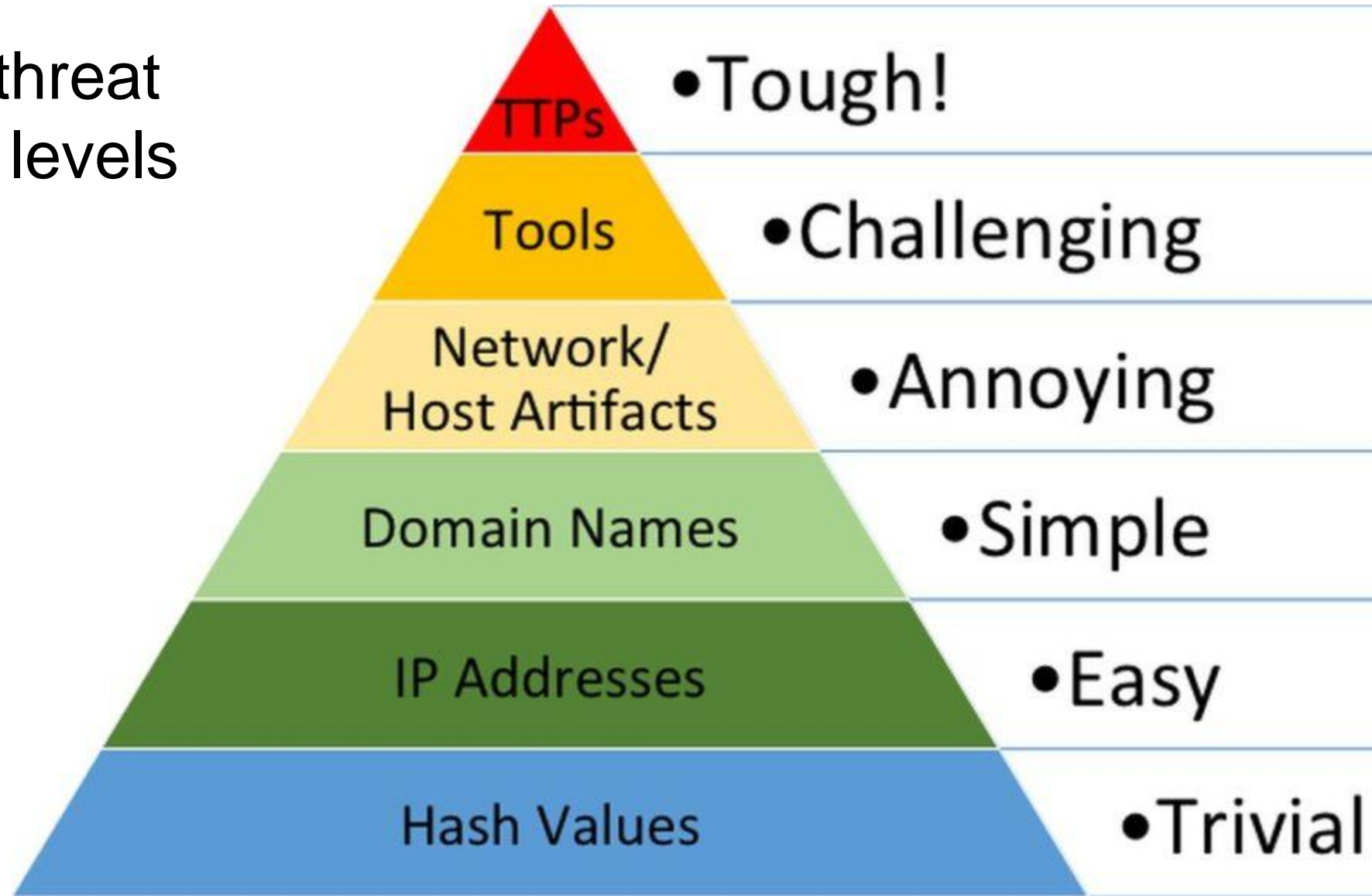


“Cyber kill chain”

Be aware of the steps taken by a cybercriminal to conduct some cyber attack

Responding to a threat can have varying levels of difficulty

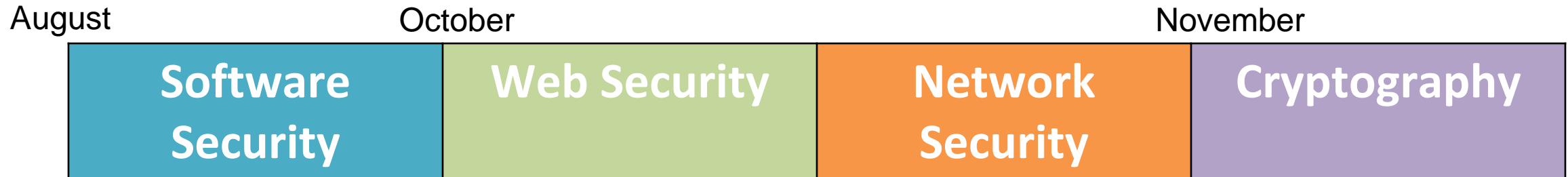
Indicators of compromise (IOCs) refer to data that indicates a system may have been infiltrated by a cyber threat. They provide cybersecurity teams with crucial knowledge after a data breach or another breach in security.



“Pyramid of Pain”



CSCI 476 Timeline



Look at a variety of attacks in the realm of **software security, web security, network security, cryptography**

→ Learn the countermeasures for these attacks (and how effective they are)

SET-UID Programs

A SET-UID Program allows a user to run a program with the program owner's privilege

- User runs a program w/ temporarily elevated privileges

Every process has two User IDs

- Real UID (RUID)– Identifies the **owner** of the process
- Effective UID (EUID)– Identifies **current privilege** of the process



**If a program owner == root,
The program runs with root privileges**

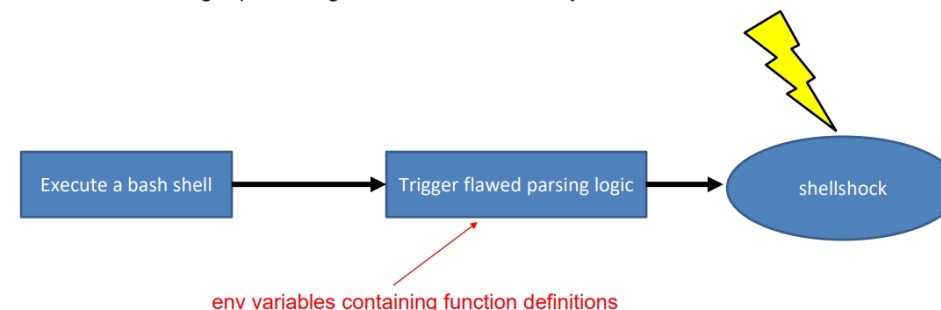
- Methods of Attack
 - Unsafe Function Calls (`system()` vs `exec()`)
 - Overwriting important ENV variables (`PATH`)
 - Overwriting important linking ENV variables (`LD PRELOAD`)

Shellshock Attack

- Due to parsing logic in a vulnerable version of bash, we can export an environment variable that bash will interpret as a shell function
 - Bash identifies A as a function because of the leading “() {” and converts it to B
- ```
[A]$ foo=() { echo "hello world"; }; echo "extra";
[B]$ foo () { echo "hello world"; }; echo "extra";
```
- In B, the string now becomes **two commands**

**Two conditions** are needed to exploit the vulnerability

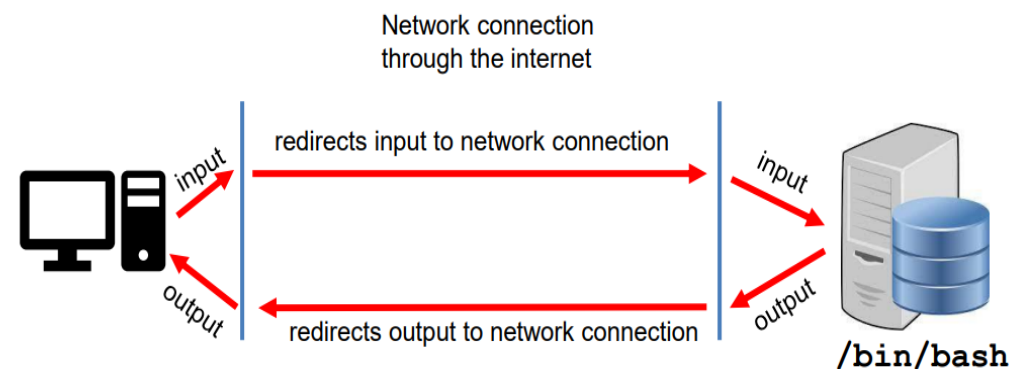
- The target process must run a vulnerable version of **bash**
- The target process gets **untrusted user input via env. variables**



A **reverse shell** is a shell, but it redirects stdin, stdout, stderr back to our machine

## Example Payload

```
curl -A "() { echo :: }; echo; /bin/cat /etc/passwd" [URL]
```



bash is listening for input on a network connection



# Buffer Overflow

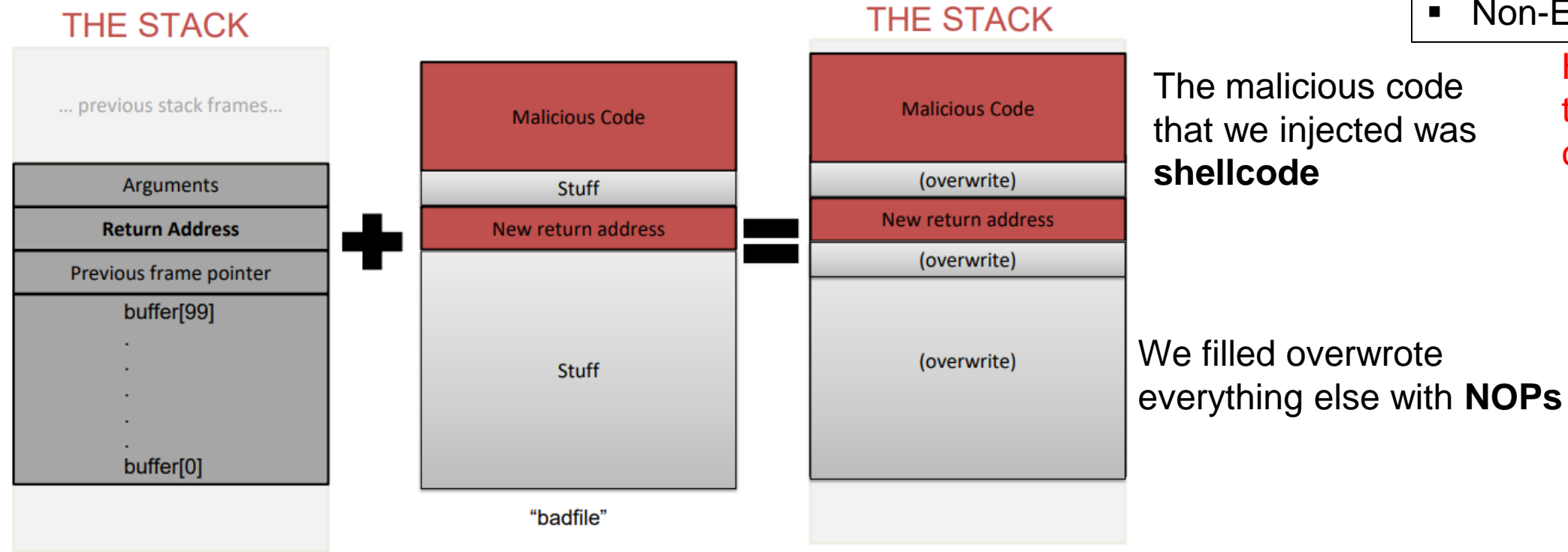
When a program unsafely writes data to **the stack** via some buffer, we can overflow the buffer with our data

- If we are smart, we can overwrite the **return address** and have the code jump to **our malicious function**

To find the important locations in our stack, we used `$ebp` and `$esp`

Countermeasures:

- Secure Shell (/bin/dash)
- ASLR
- Stack Guard
- Non-Executable Stack



How did we bypass these countermeasures?

# SQL Injection

It is common for user input to be inserted into a back-end SQL query. If an application is not careful about sanitizing user input, a user could **supply an input that could be interpreted as SQL code and will interfere with the query**

```
SELECT * FROM credential WHERE
name= ' ' and password= ' ' ;
```

```
SELECT * FROM credential WHERE
name= 'Alice'# ' and password= 'asdadasd' ;
```

Username = Alice'#  
Password = asdadasd

Countermeasure: SQL Prepare() statements

NickName: ',salary='100000000

```
UPDATE credential SET
nickname= ',salary='100000000',
email='$input_email',
address='$input_address',
PhoneNumber='$input_phonenumber'
where ID=$id;
```

# XSS Attack

Goal: Get someone else's browser to execute our own JavaScript code

Vulnerability: Unsafe user input handling, and unsafe web communication policies

```
<script>document.write('');</script>
```



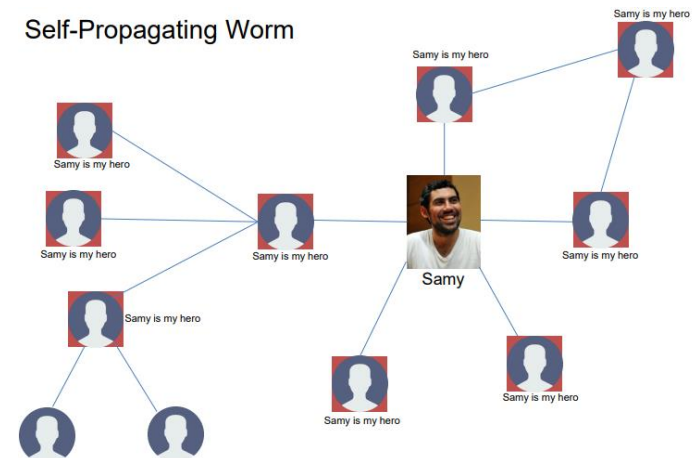
```
Connection received on 10.0.2.4 38954
GET /?c=Elgg%3Dc3nvr4sm57jqk48dns0hb8bub3 HTTP/1.1
Host: 10.9.0.1:5555
User-Agent: Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Ubuntu; Linux x86_64; rv:83.0) Gecko/20100101 Firefox/83.0
Accept: image/webp,*/
Accept-Language: en-US,en;q=0.5
Accept-Encoding: gzip, deflate
Connection: keep-alive
Referer: http://www.xsslabelgg.com/profile/alice
```

*netcat server*

Countermeasures:

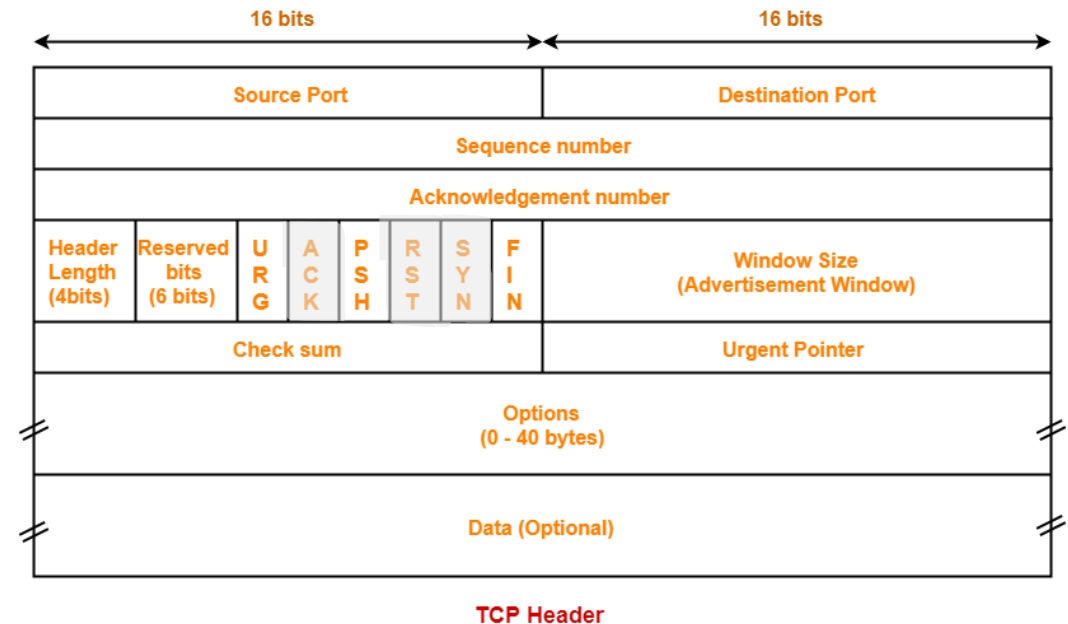
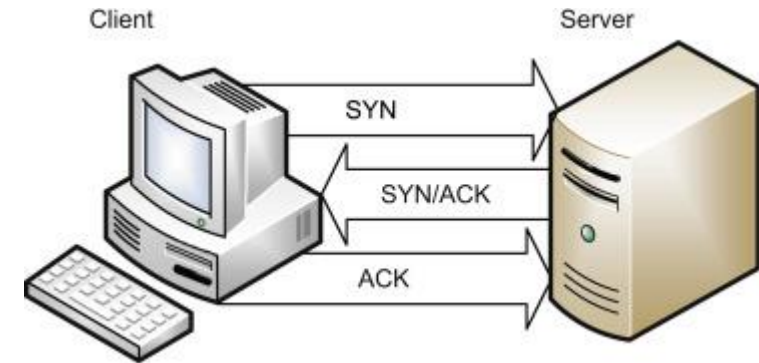
- Filtering
- Encoding
- CSP, CORS

Self-Propagating Worm



# TCP Attacks

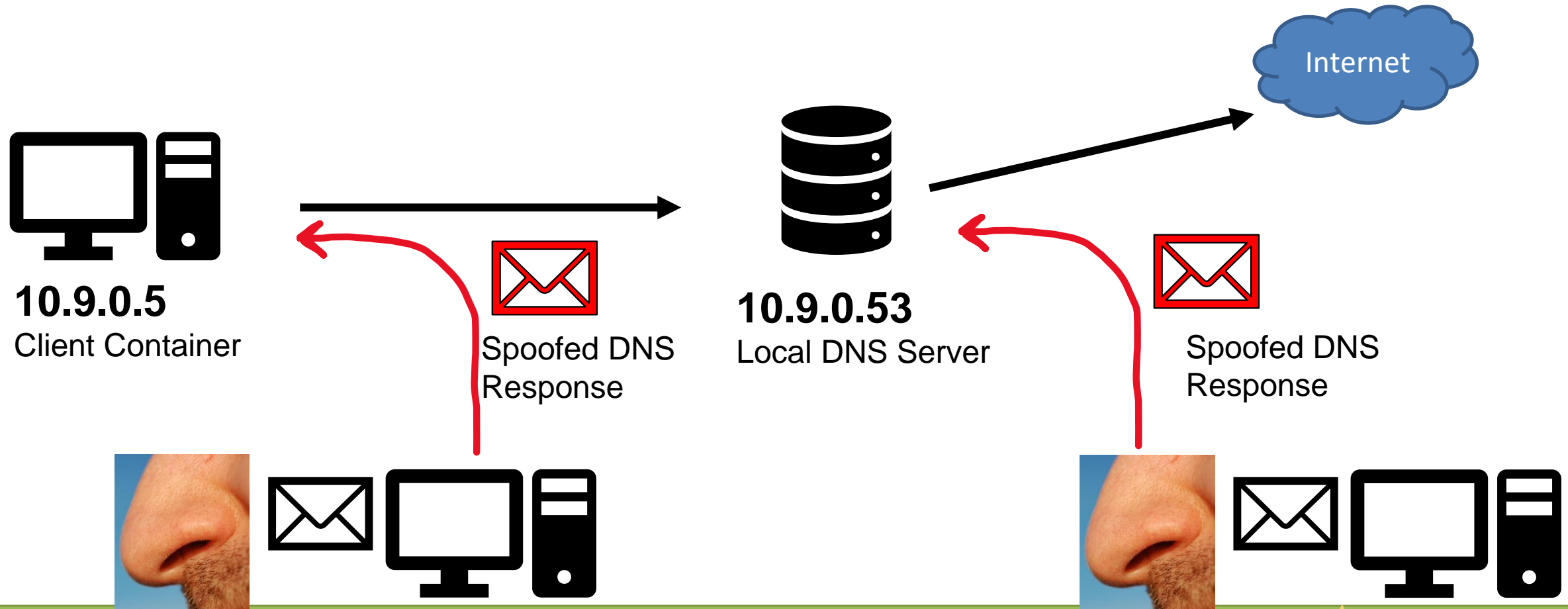
- **TCP Flooding**- spoof a bunch of packets with bogus source IP addresses with the SYN flag. The server thinks these are legitimate requests and allocates computational resources for the request. We flood a server with these until the server can no longer accept new requests (and essentially denying service)
- **TCP Reset**- Break an existing TCP connection by spoofing a TCP RST packet that looks like it came from one of the people in the existing TCP connection.
- **TCP Hijack**- Hijack an existing TCP connection to get a TCP server to execute arbitrary commands. Spoofed a packet with the correct information so that the server thinks it came from the client



# DNS Poisoning

A **DNS** cache poisoning attack is done by tricking a server into accepting malicious, spoofed DNS information

Instead of going to the IP address of the legitimate website, they will go to the IP address that we place in our malicious DNS response (spoofed)



# Symmetric Cryptography / Secret Key Encryption

Block Cipher (AES)  
→ Split messages into fixed sized blocks, encrypt each block separately

Hello there world

|          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 01101000 | 01100101 | 01101100 |
| 01101100 | 01101111 | 00100000 |
| 01110100 | 01101000 | 01100101 |
| 01110010 | 01100101 | 00100000 |
| 01110111 | 01101111 | 01110010 |
| 01101100 | 01100100 | 00001010 |

Block 1

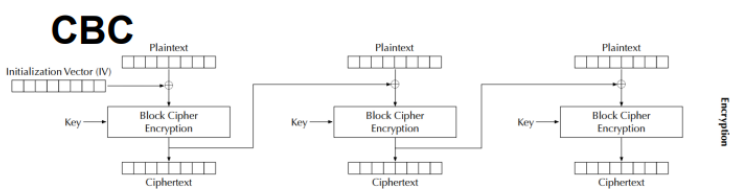
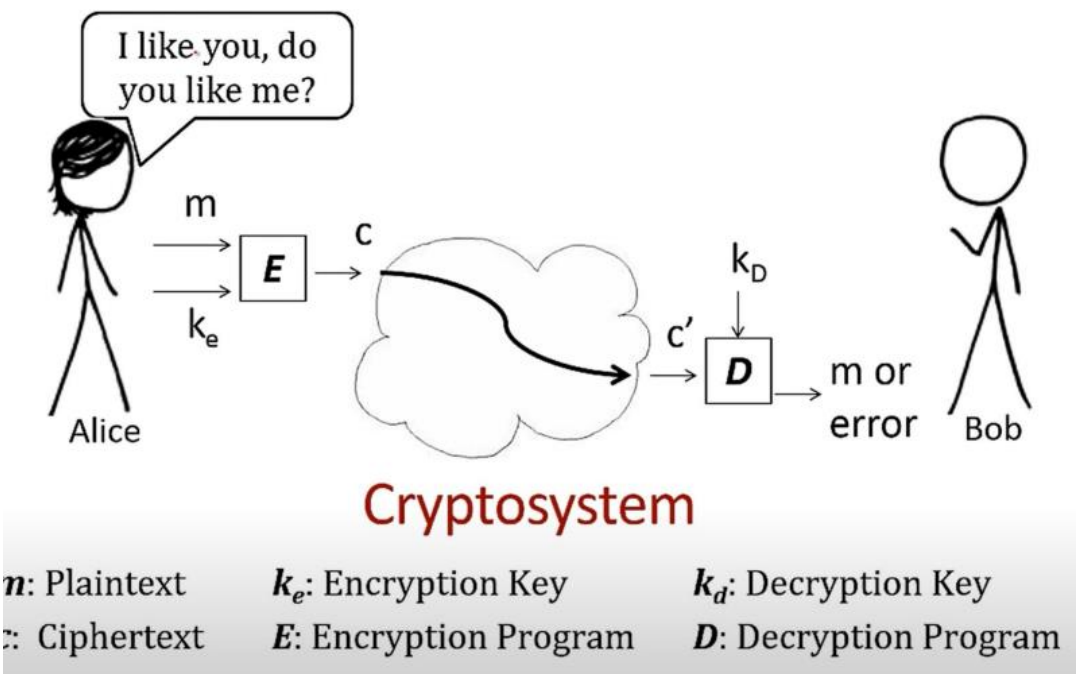
Block 2

Block 3

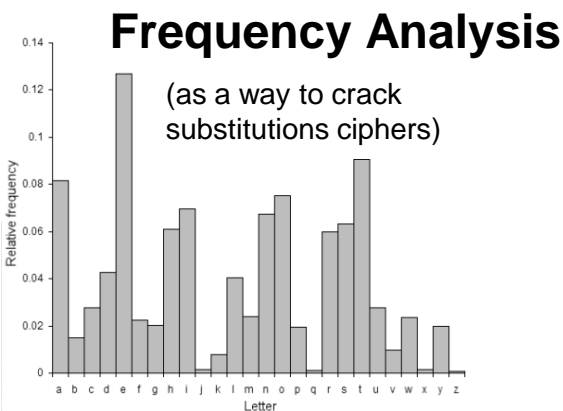


Modes of encryption: **ECB**, CBC, CFG, CTR, CFB

**Padding** gets applied if the plaintext is not a multiple of the block size



An **initialization vector (IV)** is an arbitrary number that can be used with a secret key for data encryption



# Hashing

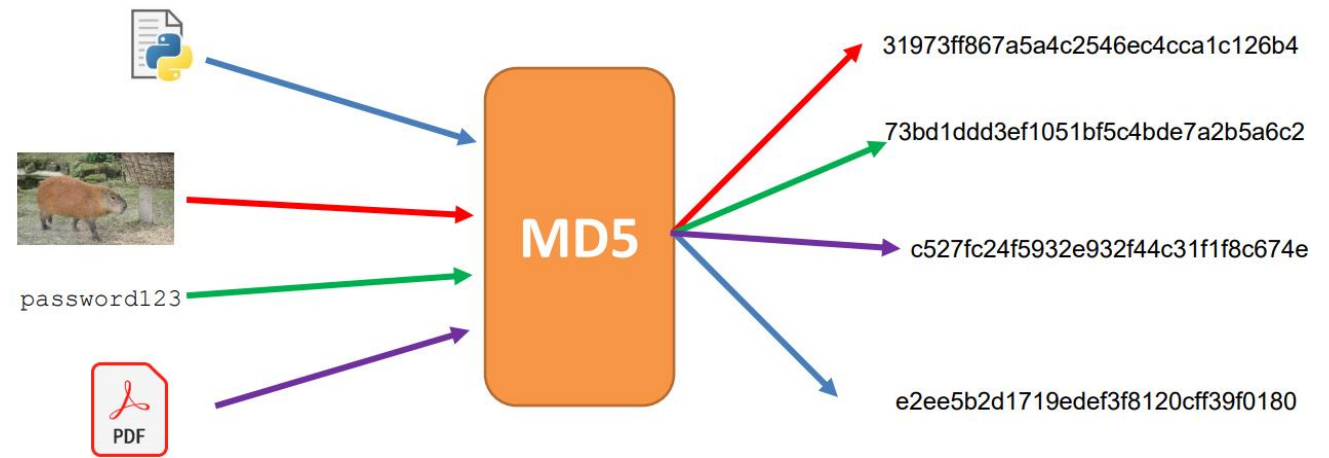
## Properties of Cryptographic Hash Function:

- Given a hash, it should be difficult to reverse it
- Given a message and it's hash, it should be difficult to find another message that has the same hash
- In general, difficult to calculate two values that have the same hash

## Applications of Hashing:

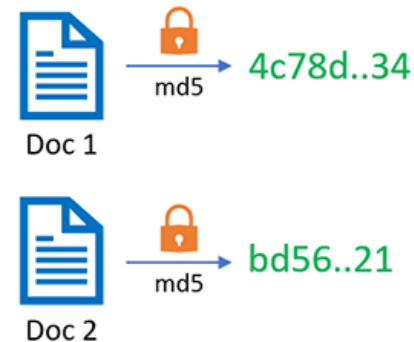
- Message Integrity
- Password Storing
- Fairness and Commitment

## Birthday Paradox



Hash Collisions occur when two inputs map to the same hash, which can have some scary consequences

Expected behavior: different hashes



Collision attack: same hashes





# Asymmetric Cryptography / Public Key Encryption

Public Key vs Private Key (Mathematically linked)

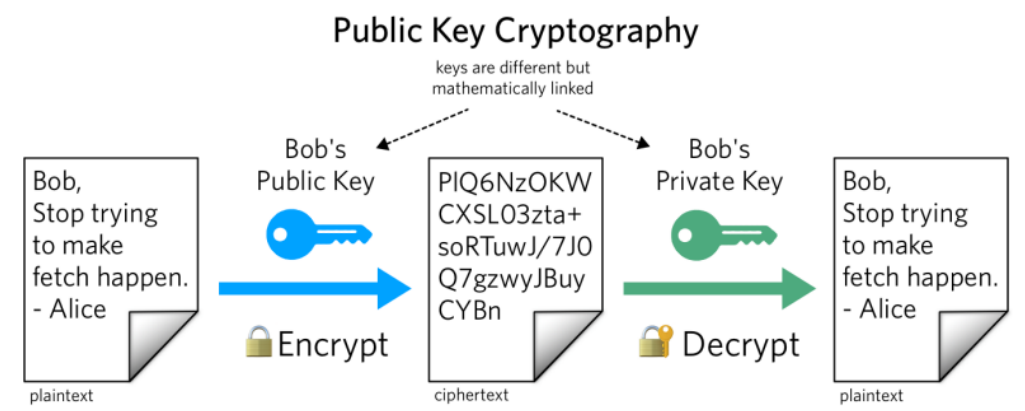
Public key used to encrypt; Private key used to decrypt

Alice knows the prime products that generated her key, so it's very easy for her to factorize

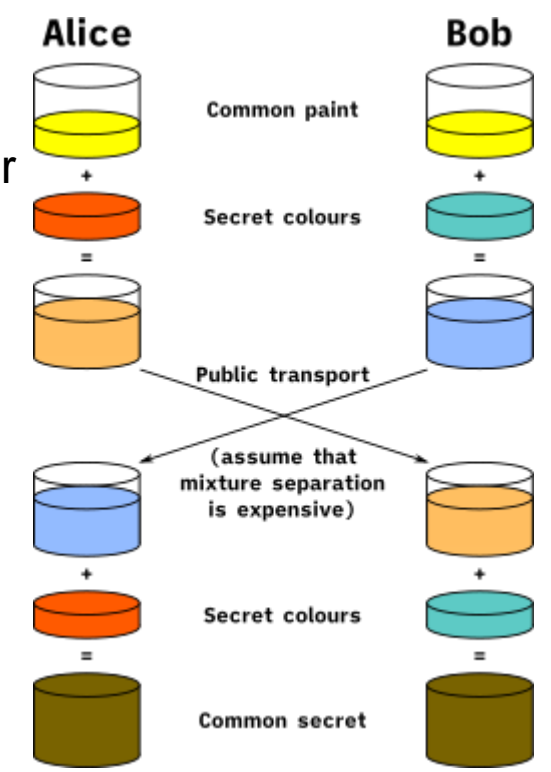
Eve does not know the products, and it is computationally infeasible for her to calculate the integer factorization of very large number

RSA can not encrypt stuff that is larger than its key size,  
So we typically will encrypt the key for a **symmetric encryption algorithm** (AES)

Private Keys are also used for **digital signatures**, which can be used to authenticate a message



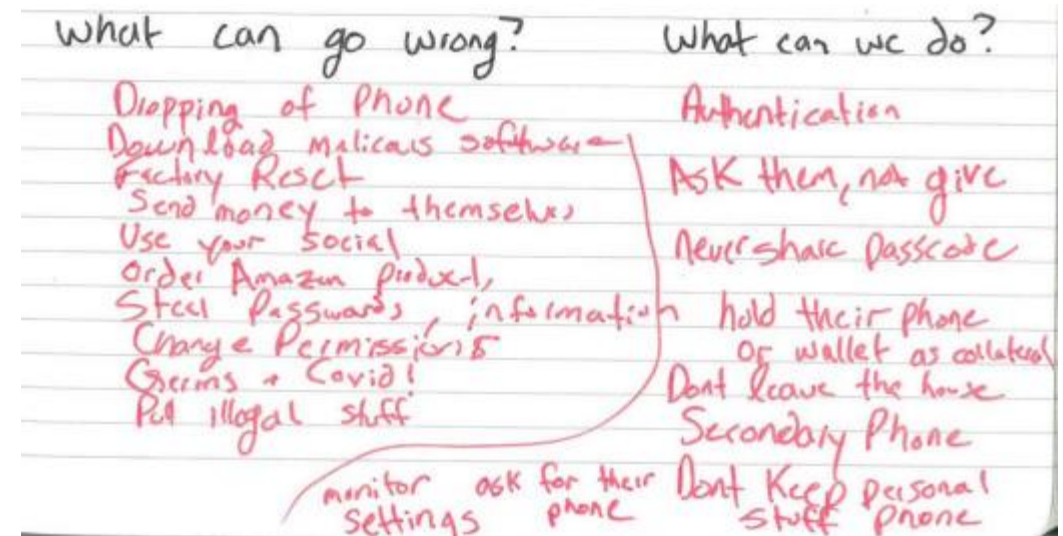
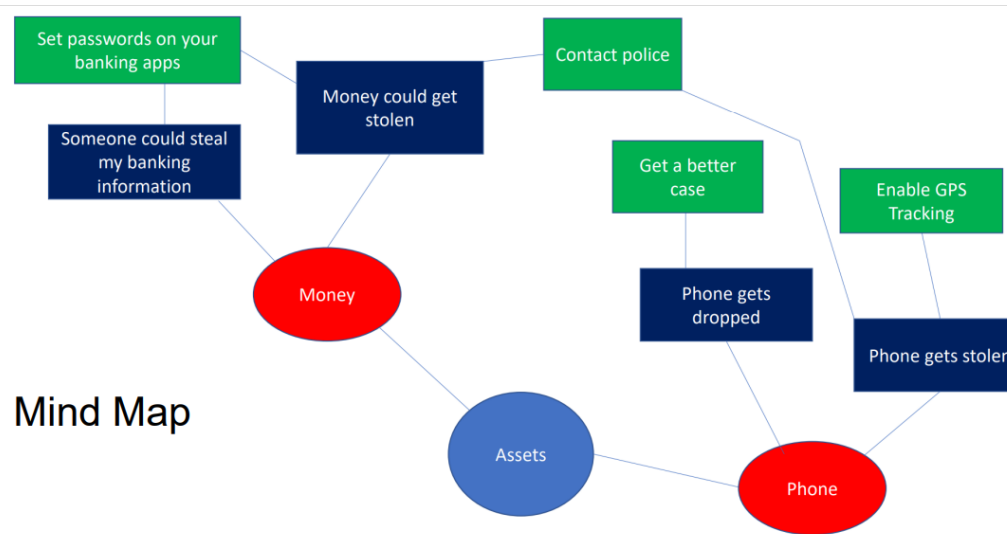
Diffie Helman  
Technique is used to transport a secret over an unsecure channel





# Threat Modeling

- Threat modeling is a structured approach to assessing risk and defenses
1. What are you building?
  2. What are the assets?
  3. What can go wrong?
  4. What should you do about those things that can go wrong?
  5. Did you do a decent job of analysis?



# CSCI 476 Course Outcomes

- Understand important principles of security and threats to the **CIA triad**
- Understand a variety of relevant vulnerabilities and defenses in **software security**  
(SETUID, Shellshock, Buffer Overflow)
- Understand a variety of relevant vulnerabilities and defenses in **network/web security**  
(SQL Injection, XSS, TCP/IP attacks)
- Understand a variety of relevant vulnerabilities and defenses in **cryptography**  
(Asymmetric, symmetric, One Way Hashing)
- Given a system, develop a **threat model**, assess potential security weaknesses, and be able to think from the perspective of a threat actor
- Make technical decisions during development of software with security in mind

# Takeaways

- **Trust-** Trust as little as possible. We never know for sure how a user will interact with software



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- **Intended Design-** Users may interact with our system in ways that we did not think of.



User-Id :

Password :

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```
./audit "my_info.txt; /bin/sh"
```

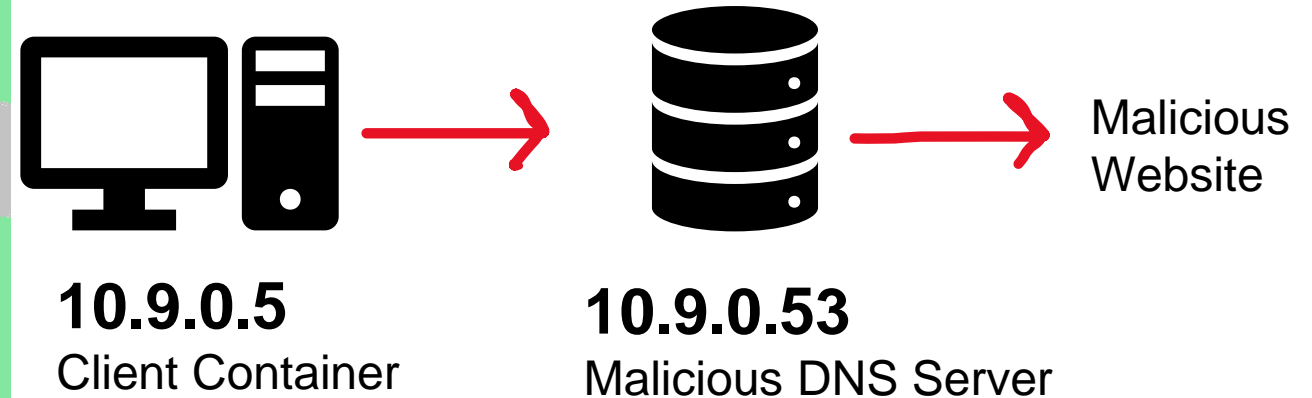


```
system(/bin/cat my_info.txt; /bin/sh)
```

```
[09/15/22]seed@VM:~/lab2$./audit "my_info.txt; /bin/sh"
I have some information
#
```

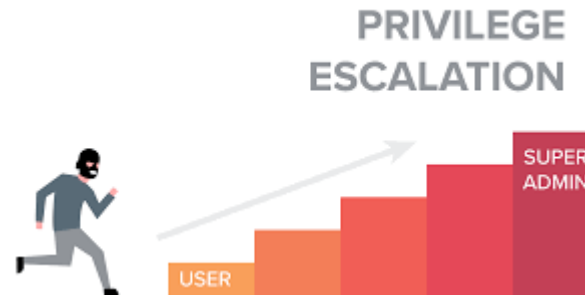
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- **Control Flow Hijack-** There should not be any way for an attacker to hijack the “natural flow of things”



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- **Control Flow Hijack-** There should not be any way for an attacker to hijack the “natural flow of things”
- **Privilege-** Privilege is a very powerful mechanism. We should never give more privilege than needed





# Takeaways

- **Trust-** Trust as little as possible. We never know for sure how a user will interact with software
- **Intended Design-** Users may interact with our system in ways that we did not think of.
- **Separation-** There should always be a clear separation of code and data (user input)
- **Control Flow Hijack-** There should not be any way for an attacker to hijack the “natural flow of things”
- **Privilege-** Privilege is a very powerful mechanism. We should never give more privilege than needed
- **Usability-** Security and software should be useable. Too much security will push people away



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(Firewall → Input Sanitization → Authentication → Antivirus Scanner)

*Countermeasures exist, but are they effective? And are they enabled?*



# Takeaways

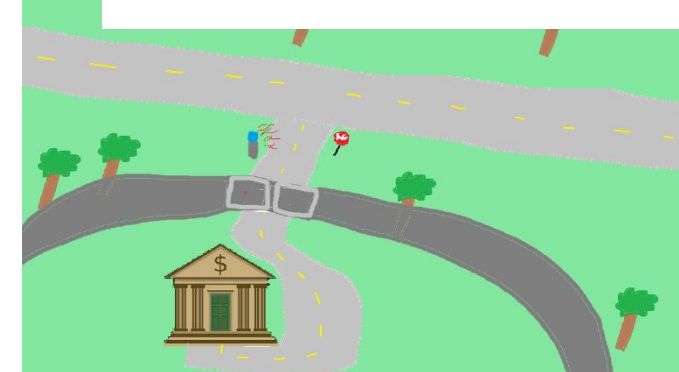
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- **There be monsters-** Vulnerabilities exist, and there will always be people that will try to exploit them



# Perfect security is impossible



- New assets
- New threats
- (ZERO days)
- New capabilities
- New technology



There is always a way to:

1. Figure out how it works
2. Use it differently than intended

- *Matt Reville*

# Takeaways

Humans will always be the **weakest** link.

- Social Engineering
- Phishing
- Writing bad code

Physical Security is also important

# What's next?

## Cybersecurity Newsletters + Blogs

- Dark Readings (<https://www.darkreading.com/>)
- Schneier on Security (<https://www.schneier.com/>)
- The Hacker News (<https://thehackernews.com/>)

## Cybersecurity Certificate and trainings

- CompTIA
- Security+
- CySa
- SANS
- ISC2

## Cybersecurity-related Classes at MSU

- CSCI 466 – Networks
- CSCI 460 – Operating Systems
- CSCI 351 – System Administration
- CSCI 5XX – Intro to Malware

- Be aware of new vulnerabilities, new attacks

- Have hope



# Thank You!

This class has been a blast to teach. Thank you for your patience, flexibility, kindness, and for laughing at my jokes 😊

I hope you enjoyed this class, and I hope the stuff you learned will be helpful in your career/future classes

If I can be of assistance to you for anything in the future (reference, advising, support), please let me know!

I will be teaching CSCI 132  
and CSCI 232 next semester



**Reese Pearsall** (He/Him)  
Instructor at Montana State University  
Bozeman, Montana, United States · [Contact info](#)

Connect with me on LinkedIn!  
**If you find a job in  
cybersecurity, *please* keep in  
touch!**



Congrats to those that are  
graduating next weekend! I  
hope you find a job that you  
love!

