

# Machine-Level Programming V: Advanced Topics

Chapter 3.10

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# Today

- **Memory Layout**
- **Buffer Overflow**
  - Vulnerability
  - Protection

# x86-64 Linux Memory Layout

*not drawn to scale*

00007FFFFFFF

## ■ Stack

- Runtime stack (8MB limit)
- E. g., local variables

## ■ Heap

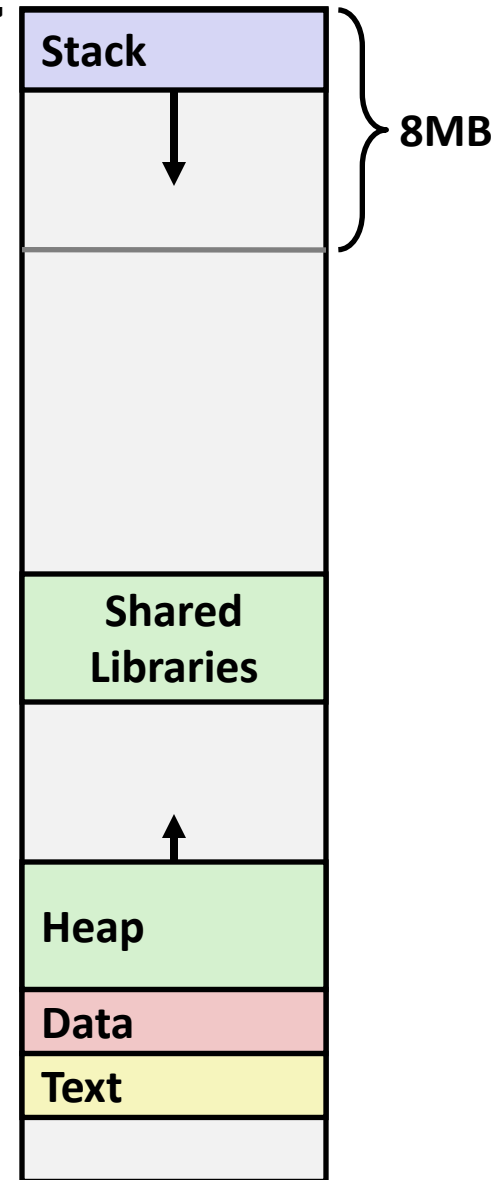
- Dynamically allocated as needed
- When call `malloc()`, `calloc()`, `new()`

## ■ Data

- Statically allocated data
- E.g., global vars, `static` vars, string constants

## ■ Text / Shared Libraries

- Executable machine instructions
- Read-only



Hex Address

400000  
000000

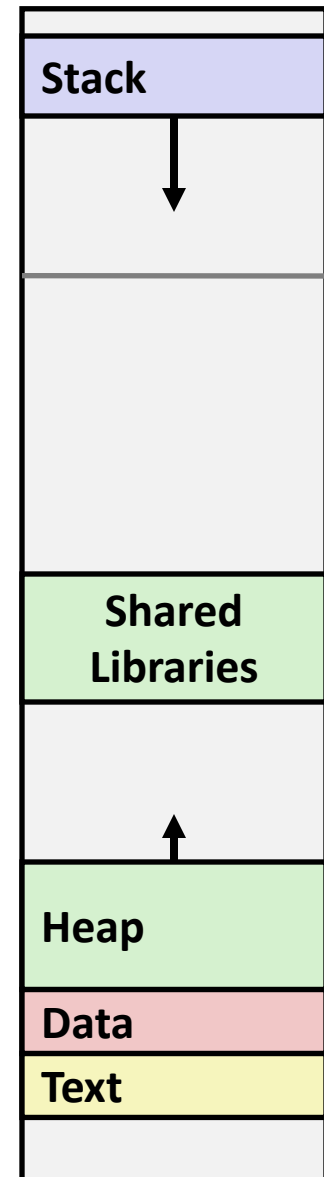
# Memory Allocation Example

```
char big_array[1L<<24]; /* 16 MB */
char huge_array[1L<<31]; /* 2 GB */

int global = 0;

int useless() { return 0; }

int main ()
{
    void *p1, *p2, *p3, *p4;
    int local = 0;
    p1 = malloc(1L << 28); /* 256 MB */
    p2 = malloc(1L << 8); /* 256 B */
    p3 = malloc(1L << 32); /* 4 GB */
    p4 = malloc(1L << 8); /* 256 B */
    /* Some print statements ... */
}
```



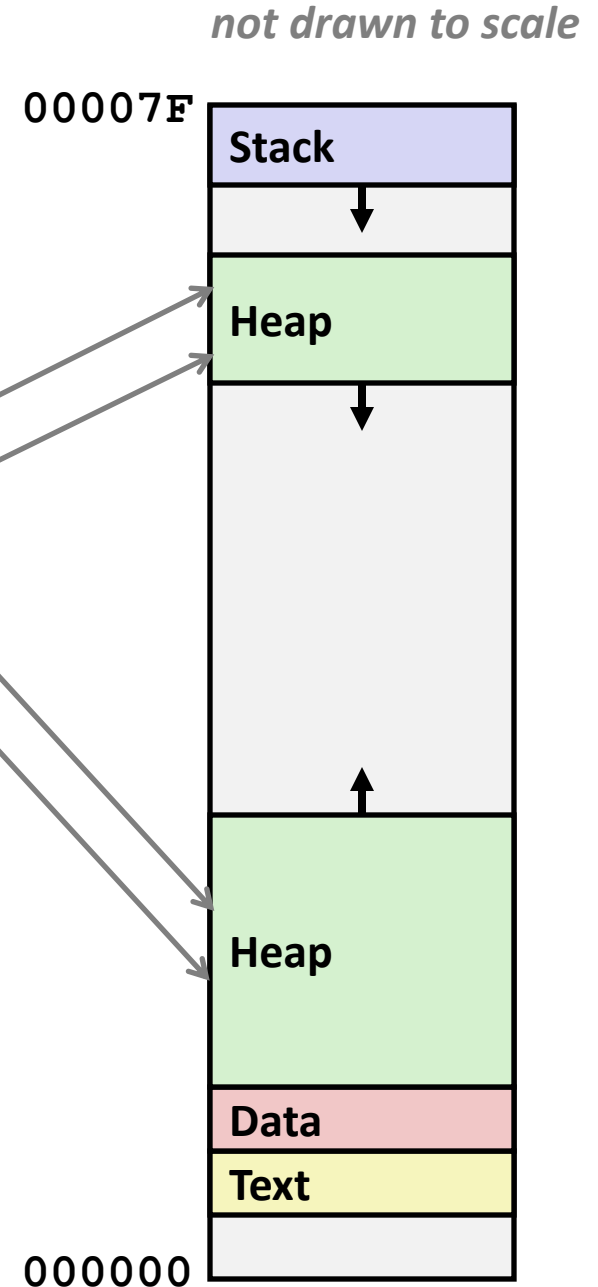
*Where does everything go?*

# x86-64 Example Addresses

*address range  $\sim 2^{47}$*

```
local
p1
p3
p4
p2
big_array
huge_array
main()
useless()
```

```
0x00007ffe4d3be87c
0x00007f7262a1e010
0x00007f7162a1d010
0x000000008359d120
0x000000008359d010
0x0000000080601060
0x0000000000601060
0x000000000040060c
0x0000000000400590
```



# Today

- Memory Layout
- **Buffer Overflow**
  - Vulnerability
  - Protection
- Unions

# Recall: Memory Referencing Bug Example

```
typedef struct {
    int a[2];
    double d;
} struct_t;

double fun(int i) {
    volatile struct_t s;
    s.d = 3.14;
    s.a[i] = 1073741824; /* Possibly out of bounds */
    return s.d;
}
```

<b>fun(0)</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>3.14</b>
<b>fun(1)</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>3.14</b>
<b>fun(2)</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>3.1399998664856</b>
<b>fun(3)</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>2.00000061035156</b>
<b>fun(4)</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>3.14</b>
<b>fun(6)</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>Segmentation fault</b>

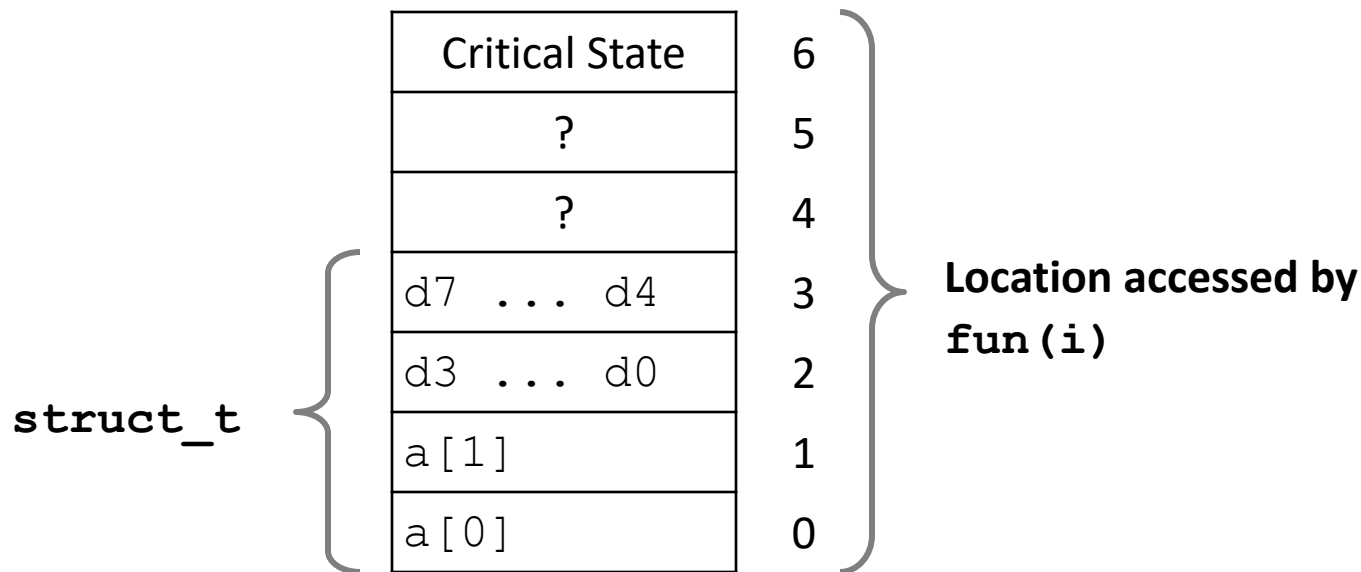
- Result is system specific

# Memory Referencing Bug Example

```
typedef struct {  
    int a[2];  
    double d;  
} struct_t;
```

fun(0)	→	3.14
fun(1)	→	3.14
fun(2)	→	3.1399998664856
fun(3)	→	2.00000061035156
fun(4)	→	3.14
fun(6)	→	Segmentation fault

## Explanation:





# Such problems are a BIG deal

- **Generally called a “buffer overflow”**
  - when exceeding the memory size allocated for an array
- **Why a big deal?**
  - It's the #1 technical cause of security vulnerabilities
    - #1 overall cause is social engineering / user ignorance
- **Most common form**
  - Unchecked lengths on string inputs
  - Particularly for bounded character arrays on the stack
    - sometimes referred to as stack smashing

# String Library Code

## ■ Implementation of Unix function `gets()`

```
/* Get string from stdin */
char *gets(char *dest)
{
    int c = getchar();
    char *p = dest;
    while (c != EOF && c != '\n') {
        *p++ = c;
        c = getchar();
    }
    *p = '\0';
    return dest;
}
```

- No way to specify limit on number of characters to read
- **Similar problems with other library functions**
  - **`strcpy`, `strcat`**: Copy strings of arbitrary length
  - **`scanf`, `fscanf`, `sscanf`**, when given `%s` conversion specification

# Vulnerable Buffer Code

```
/* Echo Line */  
void echo()  
{  
    char buf[4]; /* Way too small! */  
    gets(buf);  
    puts(buf);  
}
```

```
void call_echo() {  
    echo();  
}
```

← btw, how big  
is big enough?

```
unix>./bufdemo-nsp  
Type a string:012345678901234567890123  
012345678901234567890123
```

```
unix>./bufdemo-nsp  
Type a string:0123456789012345678901234  
Segmentation Fault
```

# Buffer Overflow Disassembly

echo:

00000000004006cf <echo>:

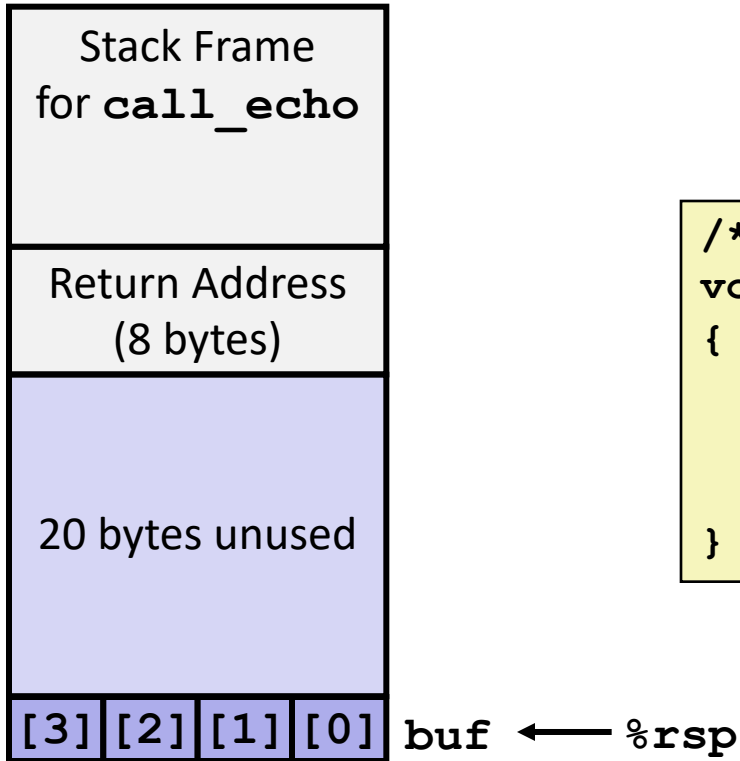
4006cf:	48 83 ec 18	sub	<b>\$0x18</b> , %rsp
4006d3:	48 89 e7	mov	<b>%rsp</b> , %rdi
4006d6:	e8 a5 ff ff ff	callq	400680 <gets>
4006db:	48 89 e7	mov	%rsp, %rdi
4006de:	e8 3d fe ff ff	callq	400520 <puts@plt>
4006e3:	48 83 c4 18	add	\$0x18, %rsp
4006e7:	c3	retq	

call\_echo:

4006e8:	48 83 ec 08	sub	\$0x8, %rsp
4006ec:	b8 00 00 00 00	mov	\$0x0, %eax
4006f1:	e8 d9 ff ff ff	callq	4006cf <echo>
<b>4006f6:</b>	<b>48 83 c4 08</b>	add	<b>\$0x8</b> , %rsp
4006fa:	c3	retq	

# Buffer Overflow Stack

*Before call to gets*

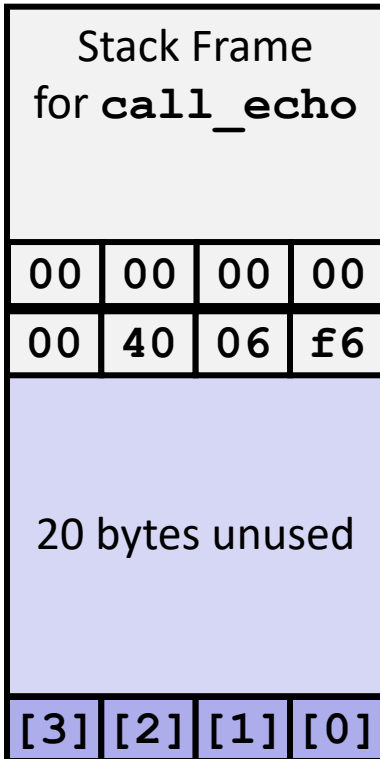


```
/* Echo Line */
void echo()
{
    char buf[4]; /* Way too small! */
    gets(buf);
    puts(buf);
}
```

```
echo:
    subq    $24, %rsp
    movq    %rsp, %rdi
    call    gets
    . . .
```

# Buffer Overflow Stack Example

*Before call to gets*



```
void echo()  
{  
    char buf[4];  
    gets(buf);  
    . . .  
}
```

```
echo:  
    subq    $24, %rsp  
    movq    %rsp, %rdi  
    call    gets  
    . . .
```

`call_echo:`

```
. . .  
4006f1:    callq   4006cf <echo>  
4006f6:    add     $0x8,%rsp  
. . .
```

# Buffer Overflow Stack Example #1

*After call to gets*

Stack Frame for <code>call_echo</code>			
00	00	00	00
00	40	06	f6
00	32	31	30
39	38	37	36
35	34	33	32
31	30	39	38
37	36	35	34
33	32	31	30

`buf` ← `%rsp`

```
void echo()  
{  
    char buf[4];  
    gets(buf);  
    . . .  
}
```

```
echo:  
    subq    $24, %rsp  
    movq    %rsp, %rdi  
    call    gets  
    . . .
```

`call_echo:`

```
. . .  
4006f1:    callq   4006cf <echo>  
4006f6:    add     $0x8, %rsp  
. . .
```

```
unix> ./bufdemo-nsp  
Type a string: 01234567890123456789012  
01234567890123456789012
```

**Overflowed buffer, but did not corrupt state**

# Buffer Overflow Stack Example #2

*After call to gets*

Stack Frame for <code>call_echo</code>			
00	00	00	00
00	40	00	34
33	32	31	30
39	38	37	36
35	34	33	32
31	30	39	38
37	36	35	34
33	32	31	30

`buf` ← `%rsp`

```
void echo()  
{  
    char buf[4];  
    gets(buf);  
    . . .  
}
```

```
echo:  
    subq    $24, %rsp  
    movq    %rsp, %rdi  
    call    gets  
    . . .
```

`call_echo:`

```
. . .  
4006f1:    callq   4006cf <echo>  
4006f6:    add     $0x8, %rsp  
. . .
```

```
unix> ./bufdemo-nsp  
Type a string: 0123456789012345678901234  
Segmentation Fault
```

**Overflowed buffer and corrupted return pointer**



# Buffer Overflow Stack Example #3

*After call to gets*

Stack Frame for <code>call_echo</code>			
00	00	00	00
00	40	06	00
33	32	31	30
39	38	37	36
35	34	33	32
31	30	39	38
37	36	35	34
33	32	31	30

`buf` ← `%rsp`

```
void echo()  
{  
    char buf[4];  
    gets(buf);  
    . . .  
}
```

```
echo:  
    subq    $24, %rsp  
    movq    %rsp, %rdi  
    call    gets  
    . . .
```

`call_echo:`

```
. . .  
4006f1:    callq   4006cf <echo>  
4006f6:    add     $0x8,%rsp  
. . .
```

```
unix> ./bufdemo-nsp  
Type a string: 012345678901234567890123  
012345678901234567890123
```

**Overflowed buffer, corrupted return pointer, but program seems to work!**

# Buffer Overflow Stack Example #3 Explained

*After call to gets*

Stack Frame for <code>call_echo</code>			
00	00	00	00
00	40	06	00
33	32	31	30
39	38	37	36
35	34	33	32
31	30	39	38
37	36	35	34
33	32	31	30

`buf` ← `%rsp`

`register_tm_clones:`

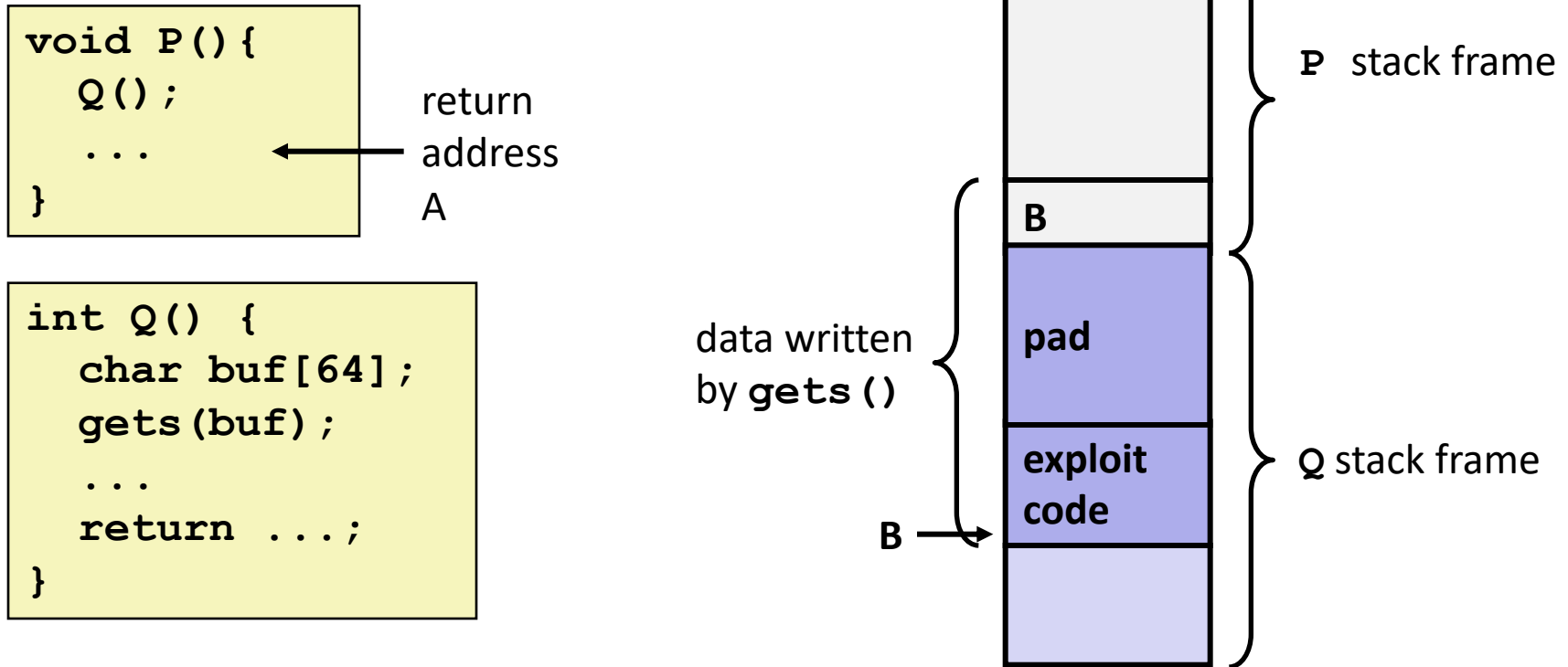
```
. . .
400600:  mov    %rsp,%rbp
400603:  mov    %rax,%rdx
400606:  shr    $0x3f,%rdx
40060a:  add    %rdx,%rax
40060d:  sar    %rax
400610:  jne    400614
400612:  pop    %rbp
400613:  retq
```

“Returns” to unrelated code

Lots of things happen, without modifying critical state

Eventually executes `retq` back to `main`

# Code Injection Attacks



- Input string contains byte representation of executable code
- Overwrite return address A with address of buffer B
- When Q executes `ret`, will jump to exploit code

# Exploits Based on Buffer Overflows

- *Buffer overflow bugs can allow remote machines to execute arbitrary code on victim machines*
- **Distressingly common in real programs**
  - Programmers keep making the same mistakes ☹️
  - Recent measures make these attacks much more difficult
- **Examples across the decades**
  - Original “Internet worm” (1988)
  - “IM wars” (1999)
  - Twilight hack on Wii (2000s)
  - ... and many, many more
- **You will learn some of the tricks in attacklab**
  - Hopefully to convince you to never leave such holes in your programs!!

# Example: the original Internet worm (1988)

## ■ Exploited a few vulnerabilities to spread

- Early versions of the finger server (fingerd) used `gets()` to read the argument sent by the client:
  - `finger droh@cs.cmu.edu`
- Worm attacked fingerd server by sending phony argument:
  - `finger "exploit-code padding new-return-address"`
  - exploit code: executed a root shell on the victim machine with a direct TCP connection to the attacker.

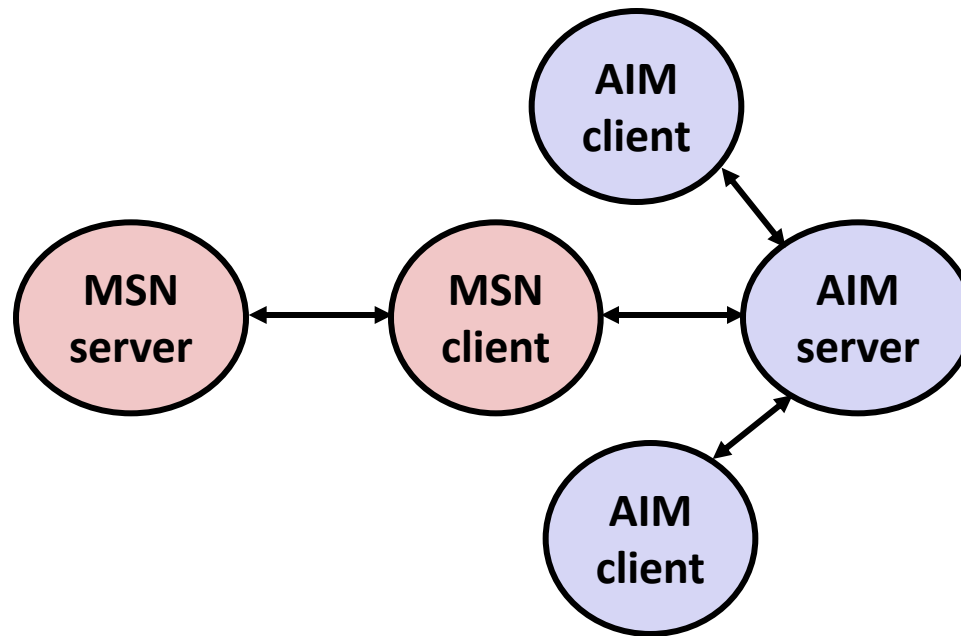
## ■ Once on a machine, scanned for other machines to attack

- invaded ~6000 computers in hours (10% of the Internet 😊)
  - see June 1989 article in *Comm. of the ACM*
- the young author of the worm was prosecuted...
- and CERT was formed... still homed at CMU

# Example 2: IM War

## ■ July, 1999

- Microsoft launches MSN Messenger (instant messaging system).
- Messenger clients can access popular AOL Instant Messaging Service (AIM) servers



# IM War (cont.)

## ■ August 1999

- Mysteriously, Messenger clients can no longer access AIM servers
- Microsoft and AOL begin the IM war:
  - AOL changes server to disallow Messenger clients
  - Microsoft makes changes to clients to defeat AOL changes
  - At least 13 such skirmishes
- What was really happening?
  - AOL had discovered a buffer overflow bug in their own AIM clients
  - They exploited it to detect and block Microsoft: the exploit code returned a 4-byte signature (the bytes at some location in the AIM client) to server
  - When Microsoft changed code to match signature, AOL changed signature location

Date: Wed, 11 Aug 1999 11:30:57 -0700 (PDT)  
From: Phil Bucking <philbucking@yahoo.com>  
Subject: AOL exploiting buffer overrun bug in their own software!  
To: rms@pharlap.com

Mr. Smith,

I am writing you because I have discovered something that I think you might find interesting because you are an Internet security expert with experience in this area. I have also tried to contact AOL but received no response.

I am a developer who has been working on a revolutionary new instant messaging client that should be released later this year.

...  
It appears that the AIM client has a buffer overrun bug. By itself this might not be the end of the world, as MS surely has had its share. But AOL is now \*exploiting their own buffer overrun bug\* to help in its efforts to block MS Instant Messenger.

....  
Since you have significant credibility with the press I hope that you can use this information to help inform people that behind AOL's friendly exterior they are nefariously compromising peoples' security.

Sincerely,  
Phil Bucking  
Founder, Bucking Consulting  
philbucking@yahoo.com

***It was later determined that this  
email originated from within  
Microsoft!***



# Aside: Worms and Viruses

- **Worm: A program that**
  - Can run by itself
  - Can propagate a fully working version of itself to other computers
- **Virus: Code that**
  - Adds itself to other programs
  - Does not run independently
- **Both are (usually) designed to spread among computers and to wreak havoc**

# OK, what to do about buffer overflow attacks

- Avoid overflow vulnerabilities
- Employ system-level protections
- Have compiler use “stack canaries”
- Lets talk about each...

# 1. Avoid Overflow Vulnerabilities in Code (!)

```
/* Echo Line */  
void echo()  
{  
    char buf[4]; /* Way too small! */  
    fgets(buf, 4, stdin);  
    puts(buf);  
}
```

- For example, use library routines that limit string lengths
  - **fgets** instead of **gets**
  - **strncpy** instead of **strcpy**
  - Don't use **scanf** with **%s** conversion specification
    - Use **fgets** to read the string
    - Or use **%ns** where **n** is a suitable integer

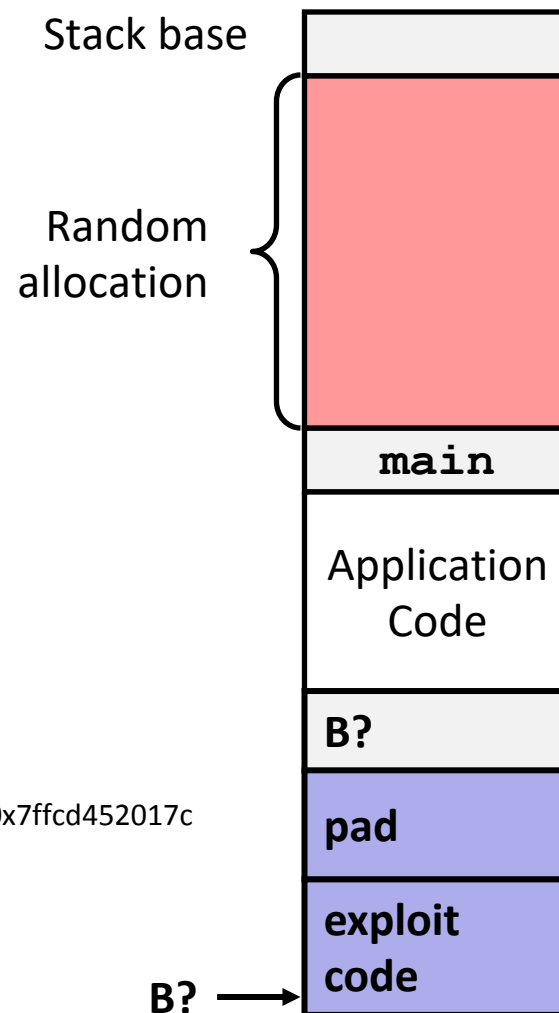
## 2. System-Level Protections can help

### ■ Randomized stack offsets

- At start of program, allocate random amount of space on stack
- Shifts stack addresses for entire program
- Makes it difficult for hacker to predict beginning of inserted code
- E.g.: 5 executions of memory allocation code

local      0x7ffe4d3be87c    0x7fff75a4f9fc    0x7ffeadb7c80c    0x7ffeaea2fdac    0x7ffcd452017c

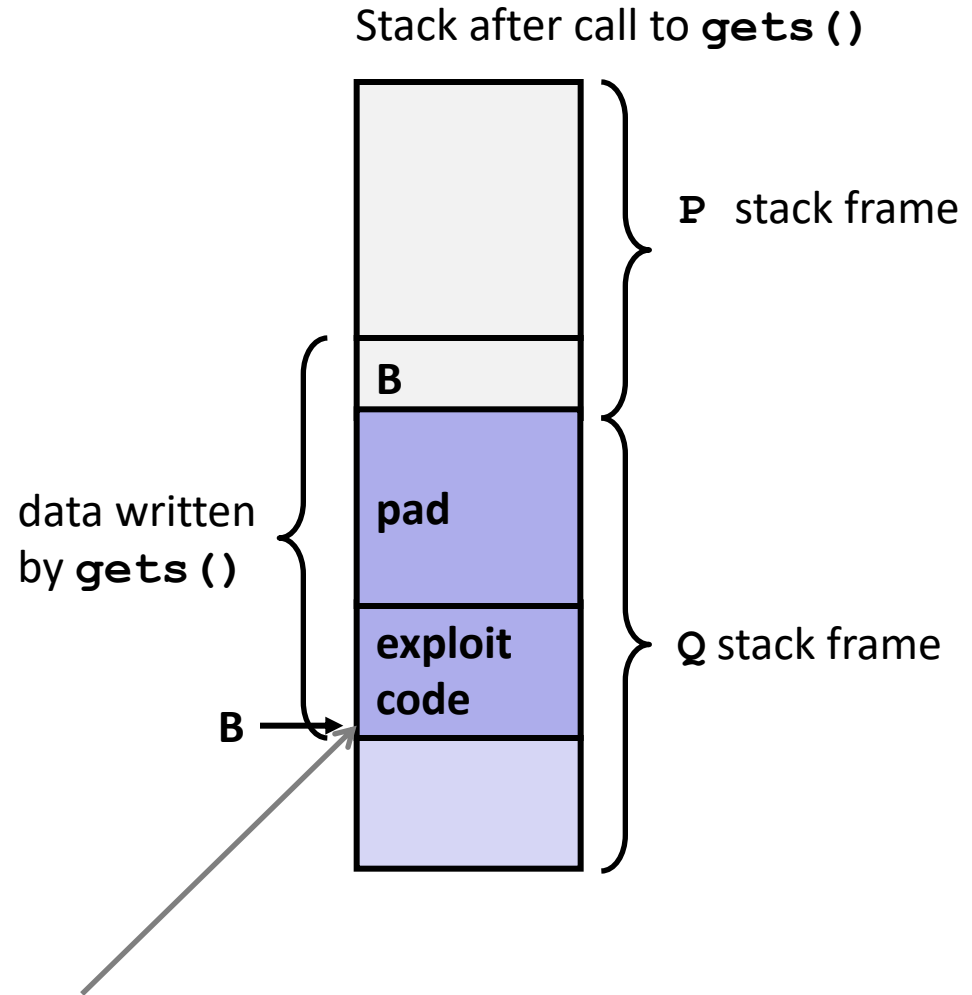
- Stack repositioned each time program executes



## 2. System-Level Protections can help

### ■ Nonexecutable code segments

- In traditional x86, can mark region of memory as either “read-only” or “writeable”
  - Can execute anything readable
- X86-64 added explicit “execute” permission
- Stack marked as non-executable



**Any attempt to execute this code will fail**

# 3. Stack Canaries can help

## ■ Idea

- Place special value (“canary”) on stack just beyond buffer
- Check for corruption before exiting function

## ■ GCC Implementation

- `-fstack-protector`
- Now the default (disabled earlier)

```
unix>./bufdemo-sp  
Type a string:0123456  
0123456
```

```
unix>./bufdemo-sp  
Type a string:01234567  
*** stack smashing detected ***
```

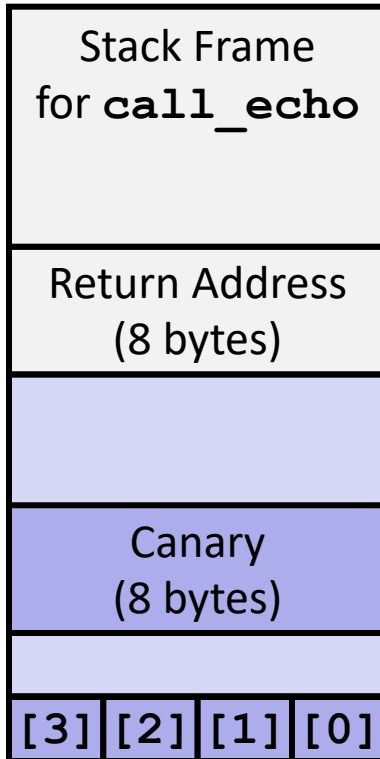
# Protected Buffer Disassembly

echo:

```
40072f:  sub    $0x18,%rsp
400733:  mov    %fs:0x28,%rax
40073c:  mov    %rax,0x8(%rsp)
400741:  xor    %eax,%eax
400743:  mov    %rsp,%rdi
400746:  callq  4006e0 <gets>
40074b:  mov    %rsp,%rdi
40074e:  callq  400570 <puts@plt>
400753:  mov    0x8(%rsp),%rax
400758:  xor    %fs:0x28,%rax
400761:  je     400768 <echo+0x39>
400763:  callq  400580 <__stack_chk_fail@plt>
400768:  add    $0x18,%rsp
40076c:  retq
```

# Setting Up Canary

*Before call to gets*



```
/* Echo Line */
void echo()
{
    char buf[4]; /* Way too small! */
    gets(buf);
    puts(buf);
}
```

```
echo:
    . . .
    movq    %fs:40, %rax    # Get canary
    movq    %rax, 8(%rsp)  # Place on stack
    xorl    %eax, %eax     # Erase canary
    . . .
```



# Checking Canary

*After call to gets*

Stack Frame for <code>call_echo</code>			
Return Address (8 bytes)			
Canary (8 bytes)			
00	36	35	34
33	32	31	30

```
/* Echo Line */
void echo()
{
    char buf[4]; /* Way too small! */
    gets(buf);
    puts(buf);
}
```

Input: **0123456**

**buf ← %rsp**

```
echo:
    . . .
    movq    8(%rsp), %rax    # Retrieve from
stack
    xorq    %fs:40, %rax    # Compare to canary
    je      .L6             # If same, OK
    call    __stack_chk_fail # FAIL
```

# Return-Oriented Programming Attacks

## ■ Challenge (for hackers)

- Stack randomization makes it hard to predict buffer location
- Marking stack nonexecutable makes it hard to insert binary code

## ■ Alternative Strategy

- Use existing code
  - E.g., library code from `stdlib`
- String together fragments to achieve overall desired outcome
- *Does not overcome stack canaries*

## ■ Construct program from *gadgets*

- Sequence of instructions ending in `ret`
  - Encoded by single byte `0xc3`
- Code positions fixed from run to run
- Code is executable

# Gadget Example #1

```
long ab_plus_c  
    (long a, long b, long c)  
{  
    return a*b + c;  
}
```

```
00000000004004d0 <ab_plus_c>:  
4004d0: 48 0f af fe  imul %rsi,%rdi  
4004d4: 48 8d 04 17  lea (%rdi,%rdx,1),%rax  
4004d8: c3           retq
```

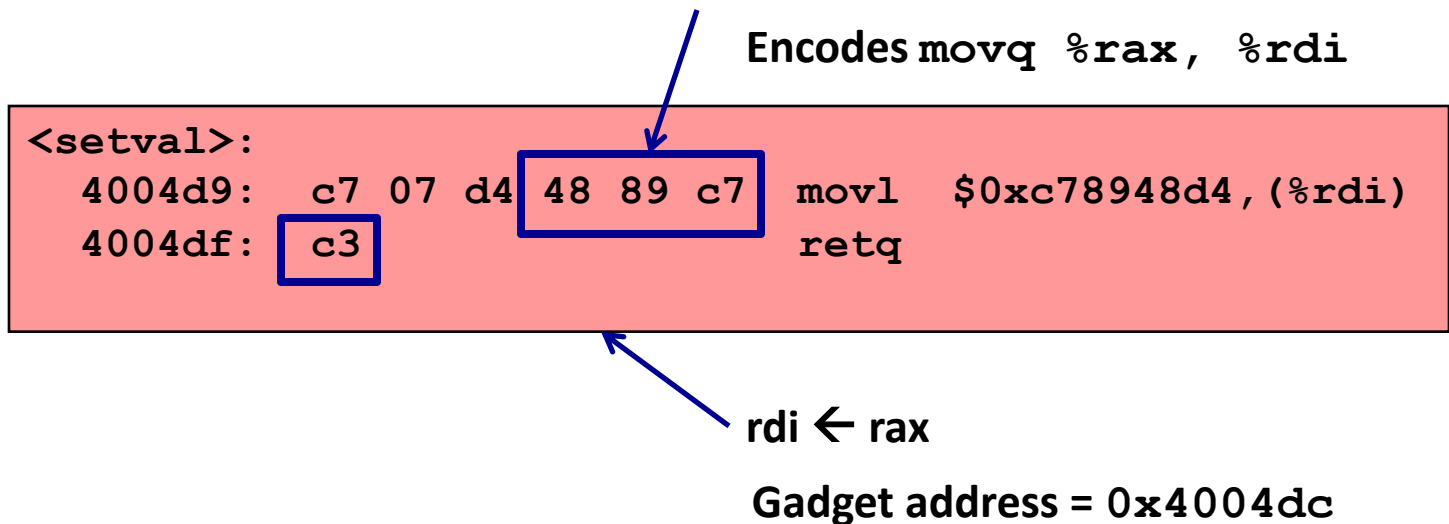
$\text{rax} \leftarrow \text{rdi} + \text{rdx}$

Gadget address = 0x4004d4

- Use tail end of existing functions

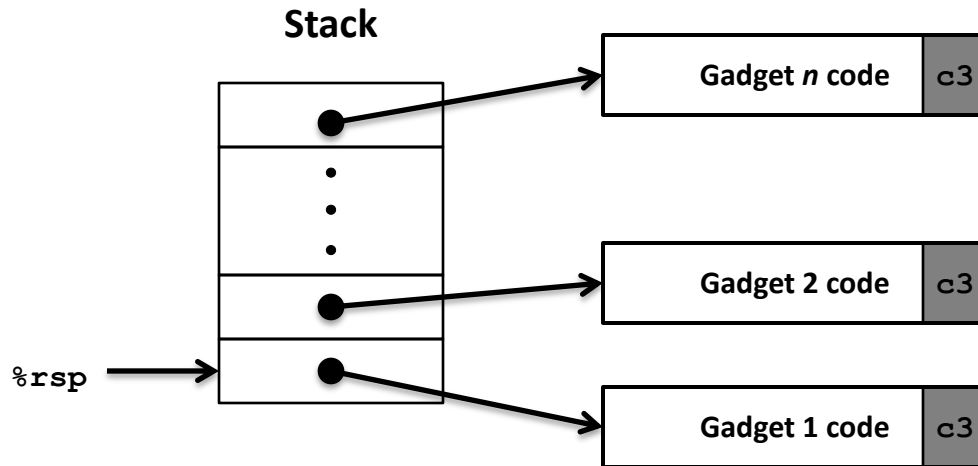
# Gadget Example #2

```
void setval(unsigned *p) {  
    *p = 3347663060u;  
}
```



## ■ Repurpose byte codes

# ROP Execution



- Trigger with `ret` instruction
  - Will start executing Gadget 1
- Final `ret` in each gadget will start next one