



# Daemons

# Daemons

- Understanding Daemons
- Creating a Daemon
- Communicating with a Daemon

# Introduction

## What is a Daemon?

A **Daemon** is a background process that runs without user input and usually provides some service, either for the system as a whole or for user programs.

Common daemon programs include:

- System Logger (**syslogd**);
- Web Servers (**httpd**);
- Mail Servers (**smtpd**);
- Database Servers (**mysqld**).
- FTP Servers (**ftpd**)

# Introduction

## Understanding Daemons

- Normally, daemons are started when a system boots and, unless forcibly terminated, run until system shutdown.
- Because a daemon does not have a controlling terminal, any output, either to **stderr** or **stdout**, requires special handling.
- Daemons often run with superuser privilege because they use privileged ports (1 - 1024) or because they have access to some sort of privileged resource.
- Daemons generally are process group leaders and session leaders.
- Finally, a daemon's parent is the **init** process, which has the PID of 1. (daemon is an orphan process inherited by **init**)



# Creating a Daemon

## Creating a Daemon

Although a daemon may seem mysterious and difficult to program, it is really very simple if you keep a few rules in mind and know the key function calls to make.

### Simple steps to follow to create a daemon:

1. **fork** and exit in the parent process;
2. Create a new session in the child using the **setsid** call;
3. Make the root directory, **/**, the child process's working directory;
4. Change the child process's umask to **0**;
5. Close any unneeded file descriptor the child inherited.

# Creating a Daemon

## 1 . Fork and exit in the parent process

A daemon is started from a shell script or the command line.

Daemons are unlike application programs because they are not interactive, i.e., they run in the background and, as a result, do not have the controlling terminal.

The parent forks and exits as the first step toward getting rid of the controlling terminal (they only need a terminal interface long enough to get started).

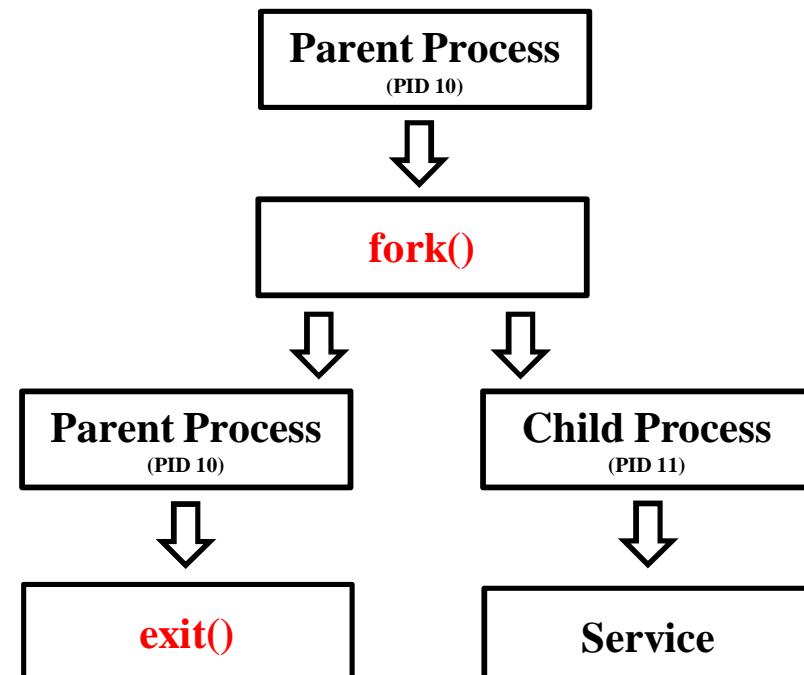
```
pid_t pid;

// create a new process
pid = fork();
if (pid < 0) { // error trying to execute fork
    ERROR("fork failure");
    exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
}

if (pid > 0) // parent process (exit)
exit(EXIT_SUCCESS);
// child process continues the execution
...
```

# Creating a Daemon

## 1 . Fork and exit in the parent process



# Creating a Daemon

## 2 . Create a new session in the child

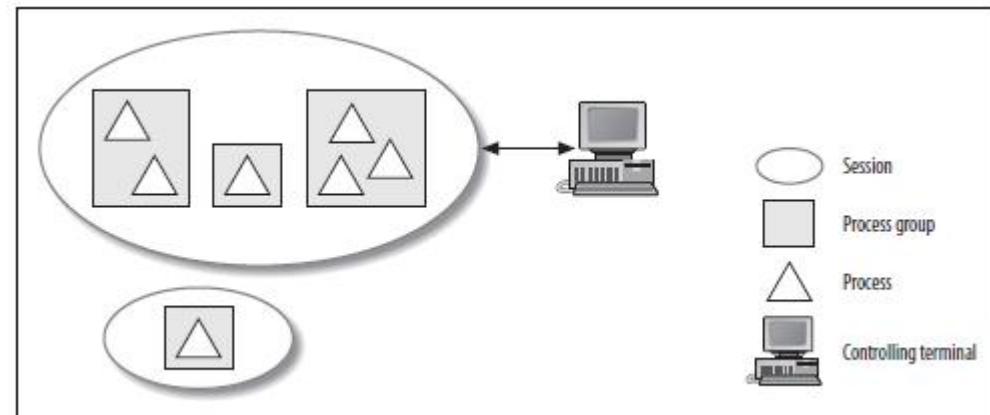
Calling **setsid** accomplishes several things:

- It creates a new session if the calling process is not a process group leader, making the calling process the session leader of the new session;
- It makes the calling process the process group leader of the new process group;
- It sets the process group ID (PGID) and the session ID (SID) to the process ID (PID) of the calling process;
- It dissociates the new session from any controlling **tty**.

```
pid_t sid;
sid = setsid(); // create a new session
if (sid < 0) {
    ERROR("setsid failure");
    exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
}
```

# Creating a Daemon

## 2 . Create a new session in the child



- Each process is a member of a process group, which is a collection of one or more processes generally associated with each other for the purposes of job control (`# cat ship-inventory.txt | grep booty | sort`).
- When a new user first logs into a machine, the login process creates a new session that consists of a single process, the user's login shell. The login shell functions as the session leader.

# Creating a Daemon

## 3 . Make “/” the root directory

This is necessary because any process whose current directory is on a mounted file system will prevent that file system from being unmounted.

Making “/” a daemon’s working directory is a safe way to avoid this possibility.

```
// make '/' the root directory
if (chdir("/") < 0) {
    ERROR("chdir failure");
    exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
}

// continue executing the child process
...
```

# Creating a Daemon

## 4 . Change the child process's umask to 0

This step is necessary to prevent the daemon's inherited umask from interfering with the creation of files and directories.

Consider the following scenario:

- A daemon inherits a umask of 055, which masks out read and execute permissions for group and other.
- Resetting the daemon's umask to 0 prevents such situation.

```
// resetting umask to 0
umask(0);

// continue executing the child process

...
```

# Creating a Daemon

## 5 . Close any unneeded file descriptor

This is simply a common sense step.

There is no reason for a child to keep open descriptors inherited from parent.

The list of potential file descriptors to close includes at least stdin, stdout and stderr.

```
// close unneeded file descriptors
close(STDIN_FILENO);
close(STDOUT_FILENO);
close(STDERR_FILENO);

// continue executing the child process

...
```



# Daemon Problem

## Problem:

Once a daemon calls **setsid**, it no longer has the controlling terminal and so it has nowhere to send output that would normally go to **stdout** or **stderr** (such as error messages).

## Solution:

Fortunately, the standard utility for this purpose is the **syslog** service, provided by the system logging daemon, **syslogd**.

# Using syslog

## Handling Errors with syslog

**syslogd** is a daemon that allow to save log messages from other daemons or applications.

The relevant interface is defined in **<syslog.h>** header file.

The API is simple, **openlog** opens the log, **syslog** writes a message to it, and **closelog** close the log.

The function prototypes are listed here:

```
#include <syslog.h>

void openlog(char *ident, int option, int facility);
void closelog(void);
void syslog(int priority, char *format, ...);
```

# Using syslog

```
void openlog(char *ident, int option, int facility);
```

**openlog** initiates a connection to the system logger.

**ident** is a string added to each message and typically is set to the name of the program.

The **option** argument is a logical OR of one or more of the default values listed here:

- **LOG\_CONS** - write to the console if the system logger is unavailable.
- **LOG\_NDELAY** - open the connection immediately. Normally, the connection is not opened until the first message is sent.
- **LOG\_PERROR** - print to stderr.
- **LOG\_PID** - include the process's PID with each message.

# Using syslog

```
void openlog(char *ident, int option, int facility);
```

**facility** specifies the type of program sending the message and can be one of the following values.

**LOG\_AUTHPRIV**

Security/authorization messages

**LOG\_CRON**

Clock daemons; cron and at

**LOG\_DAEMON**

Other system daemons

**LOG\_KERN**

Kernel messages

**LOG\_LOCAL[0-7]**

Reserved for local use

**LOG\_LPR**

Line printer subsystem

**LOG\_MAIL**

The mail subsystem

**LOG\_NEWS**

Usenet news subsystem

**LOG\_SYSLOG**

Messages generated by syslog

**LOG\_USER**

Default

**LOG\_UUCP**

UUCP

# Using syslog

**void closelog(void)**

**closelog** close the system logger connection.

The use of **openlog** and **closelog** is optional, because **syslog** will open the log file automatically the first time it is called, and close the log file when your application is terminated.

**void syslog(int priority, char \*format, ...);**

**syslog** write a message to system logger.

**priority** specifies the importance of the message.

**LOG\_EMERG** – System is unusable

**LOG\_ALERT** – Take action immediately

**LOG\_CRIT** – Critical condition

**LOG\_ERR** – Error condition

**LOG\_WARNING** – Warning condition

**LOG\_NOTICE** – Normal but significant condition

**LOG\_INFO** – Informational message

**LOG\_DEBUG** – Debugging message

# Communications

## Communicating with a Daemon

To communicate with a daemon, you send it signals that cause it to respond in a given way.

For example, it is typically necessary to force a daemon to reread its configuration file. The most common way to do this is to send a SIGHUP signal to the daemon.

When you execute the command “kill PID” on command line, the signal SIGINT is sent to daemon to terminate the daemon execution.

```
#include <syslog.h>

void openlog(char *ident, int option, int facility);
void closelog(void);
void syslog(int priority, char *format, ...);
```