Systems Security Group

Lancaster University

Access Control

Learning Objectives

- Understand the main stages of access control (AC)
- Familiarise with mechanisms in each stage of AC
- Learn about AC models, policies and mechanisms

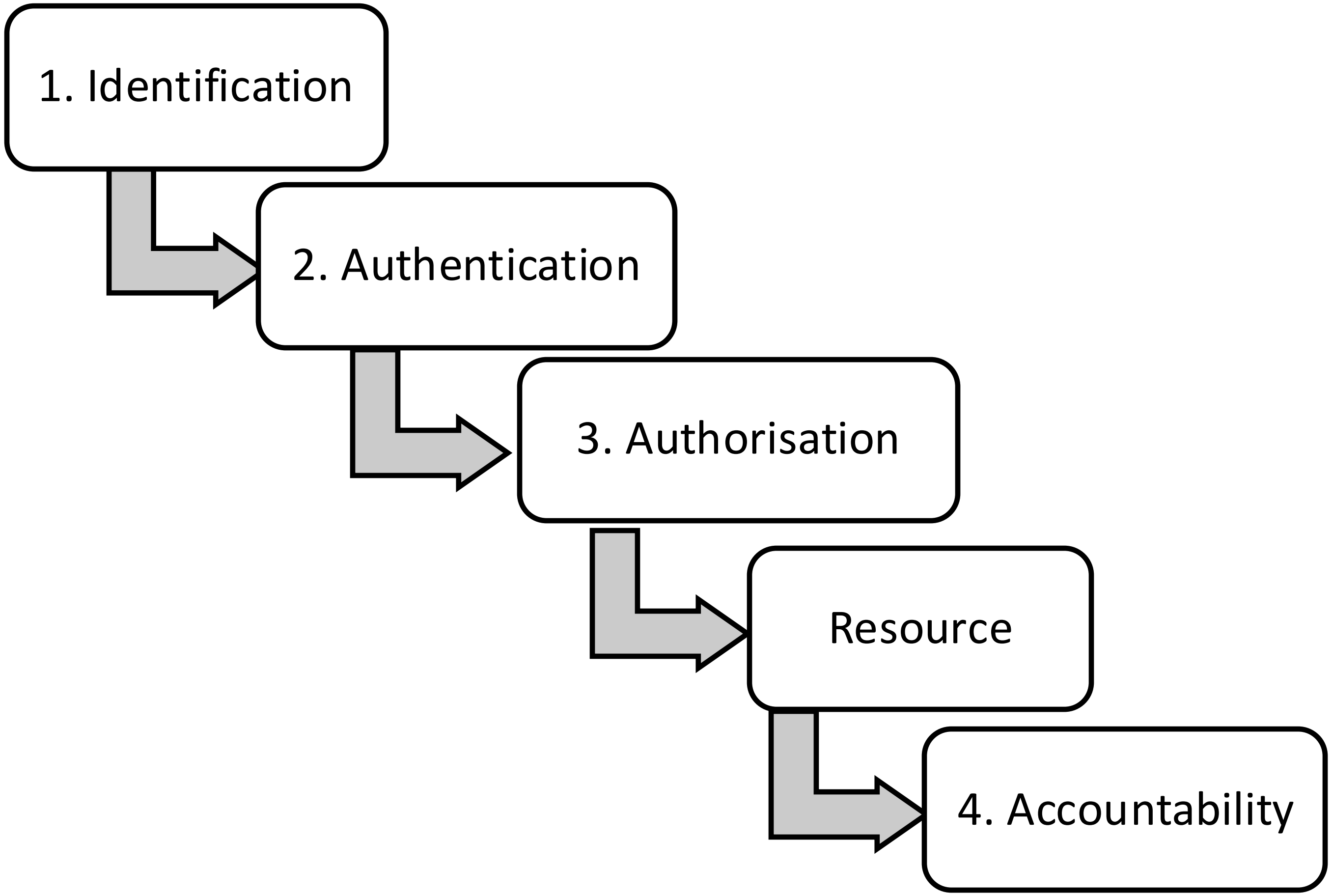
Access controls

- Set of security features that control how users and systems communicate and interact with other systems and resources
- Offer protection against unauthorised access to system resources
- Determine the level of authorisation after a successful authentication

Definitions

- **Access:** the flow of information between a subject and an object
- **Subject:** an active entity that requests access to an object or the data within an object
- **Object:** a passive entity that contains information
- Relationship is defined by the object owner

Steps for a subject to access an object



Identification

- Ensure that a subject is the entity it claims to be
- Identification information may be public information
  - User name, account number, etc.
- Creation of identities should consider
  - Uniqueness for accountability
  - Naming conventions
  - Not shared between several subjects
  - Issuance: Which authority validated or proved the identity?

Identity management (IdM)

- Identity management (IdM) describes the management of individual identifiers
- Different products to identify, authenticate and authorise users through automated means
  - Account management
    - Creation of an account
    - Offer management of privileges
    - Decommission of an account
  - Password management
  - Single Sign-on
  - Profile update

Authentication

- Authentication is private information – 3 factors
  - Something a person knows
    - Authentication by knowledge
  - Something a person has
    - Authentication by ownership
  - Something a person is
    - Authentication by characteristic
- Strong authentication or two-factor authentication include two of the above three categories.

Password attacks

- Electronic monitoring
- Access the password file
- Brute force attack
- Dictionary attack

Password attacks

- Rainbow tables
  - Use tables that contain all possible passwords already in a hash format
- Social engineering
  - An attacker convinces an individual that she has the necessary authorization to access specific resources.
- Tools to verify password strength analysis have different name depending on who is using them
  - Security professionals use password checker
  - Hackers use password cracker

Example: UNIX-style password

- How should we store passwords?
  - In cleartext?
  - Encrypted?
  - Hashed?

Password hashing

- Instead of user password, store H(password)
- When a user enters password, compute its hash and compare with entry in password file
- Hash function H must have some properties

Dictionary attack

- Password file /etc/passwd is world-readable
  - Store user account information

```
kali:x:1000:1000:kali,,,:/home/kali:/usr/bin/zsh
```

- Dictionary attacks could be a possibility if passwords come from a small dictionary

Shadow passwords

- Hashed passwords are not stored in a world-readable file
- Store hashed passwords in /etc/shadow file, which is only readable by the system administrator (root)
- Add expiration dates for passwords

```
kali:$y$j9T$bhPPnes6TlXf5GU5iCb/n.$0
B4bwr1DwncIIyNIWQBeyLat8xRGuY5O0N9Jq
qX8LE.:19651:0:99999:7:::
```

Salt

- Users with the same password have different entries in the password file
- Example, assuming ’user1’ with password ‘mypass’
- Hashed value will be H(‘mypass’+salt)
- Format: `$id$salt$hashedpassword`

user alg salt md5

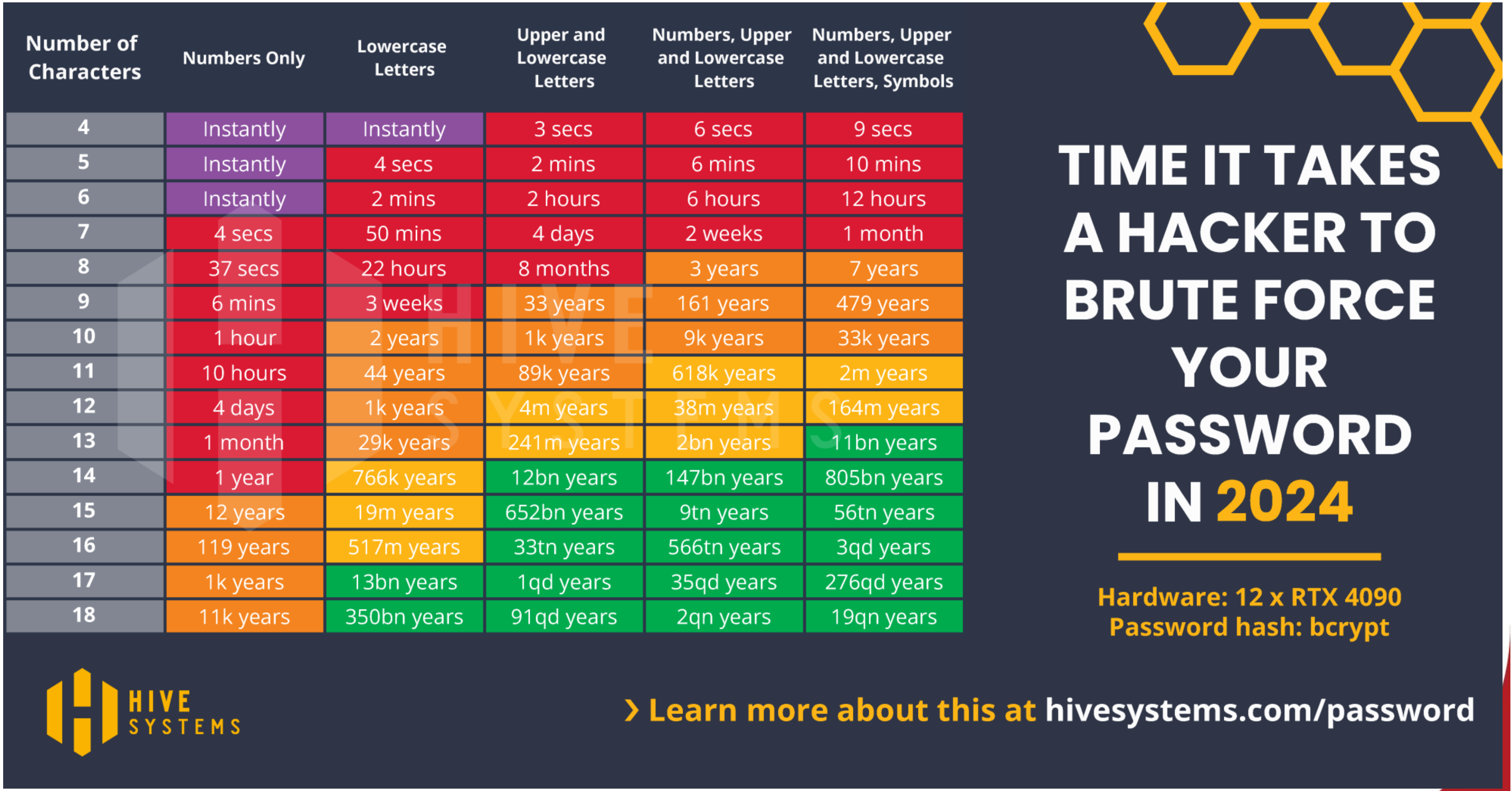
user1:$1$cvASsn/U$ 76d47e44c7bf1419ef207d0cc679f2bb

```
import hashlib
H=hashlib.md5()
H.update("mypass")
H.hexdigest()
H.update("mypass"+"cvASsn/U")
H.hexdigest()
```

Advantages of salting

- Without salt, attacker can pre-compute hashes of all dictionary words once for all password entries
- With salt, attacker must compute hashes of all dictionary words once for each password entry
  - With 1 byte of random salt, same password can hash to 2^8 different hash values

Time to crack a password



Number of Characters	Numbers Only	Lowercase Letters	Upper and Lowercase Letters	Numbers, Upper and Lowercase Letters	Numbers, Upper and Lowercase Letters, Symbols
4	Instantly	Instantly	3 secs	6 secs	9 secs
5	Instantly	4 secs	2 mins	6 mins	10 mins
6	Instantly	2 mins	2 hours	6 hours	12 hours
7	4 secs	50 mins	4 days	2 weeks	1 month
8	37 secs	22 hours	8 months	3 years	7 years
9	6 mins	3 weeks	33 years	161 years	479 years
10	1 hour	2 years	1k years	9k years	33k years
11	10 hours	44 years	89k years	618k years	2m years
12	4 days	1k years	4m years	38m years	164m years
13	1 month	29k years	241m years	2bn years	11bn years
14	1 year	766k years	12bn years	147bn years	805bn years
15	12 years	19m years	652bn years	9tn years	56tn years
16	119 years	517m years	33tn years	566tn years	3qd years
17	1k years	13bn years	1qd years	35qd years	276qd years
18	11k years	350bn years	91qd years	2qn years	19qn years

TIME IT TAKES A HACKER TO BRUTE FORCE YOUR PASSWORD IN 2024

Hardware: 12 x RTX 4090
Password hash: bcrypt

HIVE SYSTEMS

› Learn more about this at hivesystems.com/password

Biometrics

- Verify the identify by analysing unique personal attributes or behaviour
  - Physiological: What you are
  - Behavioural: What you do
- Perform accurate and repeatable measurements
- False Rejection Rate (FRR): Type I error
- False Acceptance Rate (FAR): Type II error
- The lower the number, the more accurate the system is

Biometrics

- Fingerprint, facial scan
- Retina scan, iris scan

  and more…

- How about their cost?
- What’s the user acceptance?

Authorisation

- Access criteria
  - Trust in the subject
  - Subject’s need-to-know
- Criteria can be enforced by
  - Roles
  - Groups
  - Physical or logical location
  - Time of day

Authorisation

- Default to ‘No Access’
- Authorisations creep: regularly review the principle of Least Privilege
- Least Privilege: every subject must be able to access only objects that are necessary for its legitimate purpose.

Single Sign-On (SSO)

- Enter credentials once
- Reduce time to authenticate to resources
- Streamline account management
- Issues
  - Interoperability
  - Potentially only one layer of security
- Technologies
  - Kerberos (https://web.mit.edu/Kerberos/)
  - SESAME (https://www.cosic.esat.kuleuven.be/sesame/html/sesame_what.html)
  - Security Domains
  - Social login

Accountability

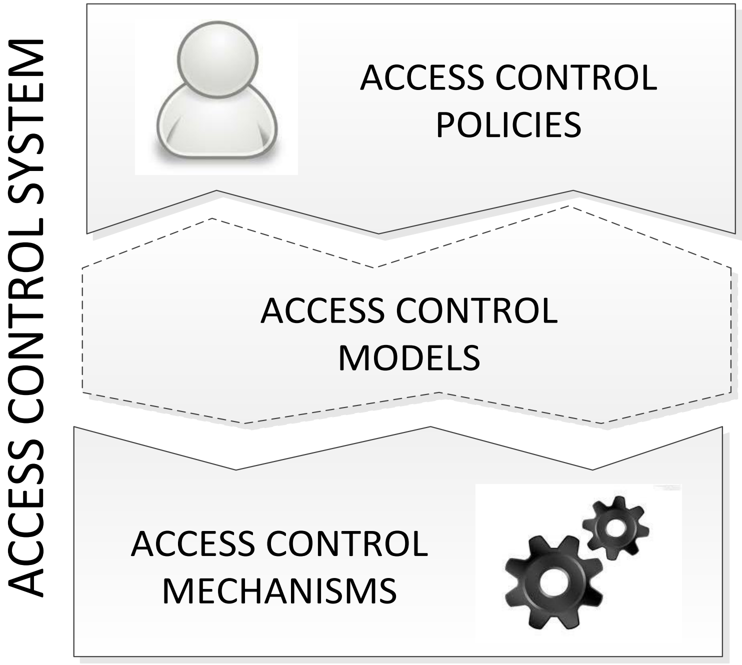
- Accountability is tracked by recording user, system and application activities
- Used to track back individuals, detect intrusions, produce reports and legal resource material
- Huge amount of data – use of tools (e.g., audit-reduction tools) to review audit information

Access control review

- Identification
  - A subject may provide identification information, e.g., username
- Authentication
  - Verify identification information, e.g., password, biometric
- Authorisation
  - Determine what operations subjects have on objects
- Accountability
  - Monitoring and logging information to track subject activities with objects

Access control (AC) systems

- AC Policies enforced through AC Mechanisms
- AC Models bridges the gap between AC Policies and AC Mechanisms



Types of access controls policies

- Mandatory Access Control (MAC)
- Discretionary Access Control (DAC)
- Role Based Access Control (RBAC)
- Attribute Based Access Control (ABAC)

Mandatory access control (MAC)

- Use of a labelling mechanism to enforce a multilevel security model,
  e.g., Unclassified < Confidential < Secret < Top Secret
- Implemented by the operating system
- Security labels are attached to all subjects and objects
- Users will be denied unless their clearance is equivalent or higher that the classification of the object
- Implemented in SE Linux, and trusted Solaris

Bell-LaPadula model

- Enforces confidentiality
- Is a subject-object model: use of subjects, objects and access operations (read, write, read/write)
- How it works?
  - The subject's clearance is compared with the object's classification
  - Specific rules are applied to control how the subject-object interactions take place

Bell-LaPadula rules

- Simple security (no read up)
  - A subject at a given security level cannot read data that reside at a higher security level
- *-property (no write down)
  - A subject in a given security level cannot write information to a lower security level
- Strong *-property
  - A subject that has read and write capabilities can only perform those functions at the same security level. Nothing higher and nothing lower.

Biba model

- Describes a set of rules that are designed to ensure data integrity
  - “read-up, write-down” model
- Simple integrity property (no read down)
  - A subject at a given level of integrity must not read data at a lower integrity level
- *- integrity property (no write up)
  - A subject at a given level of integrity must not write data at a higher level of integrity
- Invocation property
  - A process from below cannot request higher access.

Discretionary access control (DAC)

- The owner of the resource decides which subjects can access the resource
- Implemented via access control lists (ACLs)
- Used in most operating systems, Linux, Unix, Windows
- Based on sets that define security subjects (s), security objects (o) and access privileges (a)
- Access rules are defined as tuples (o, s, a)

Access control matrix

ACL

Capability

Subject	File1	File2	File3
User1	Read, write	Read	Execute
User2	Read	Read	Write
User3	Execute	Write	Read

- ACL
  - …
  - File2 – User1: Read, User2: Read, User3: Write
  - …
- Capability
  - …
  - User2 – File1: Read, File2: Read, File3: Write
  - …

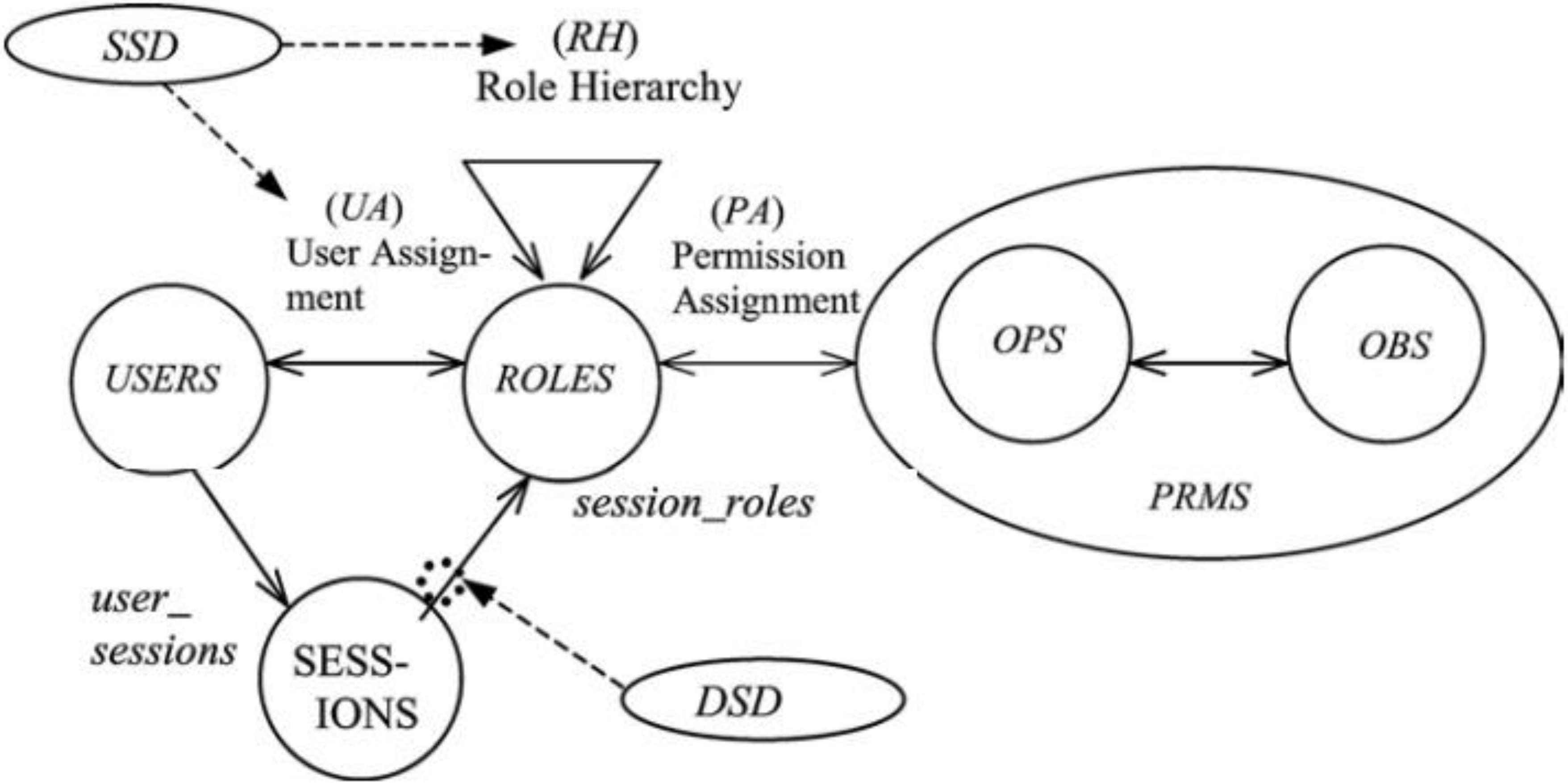
Role based access control (RBAC)

- Centrally administrated set of controls
- Supports the principles of least privilege and separation of duties.
- Useful in high employee turnover environments
- Has been standardised by the American National Standards organisation – ANSI INCITS 359-2004 (http://profsandhu.com/journals/tissec/ANSI+INCITS+359-2004.pdf)

Separation of Duties (SoD)

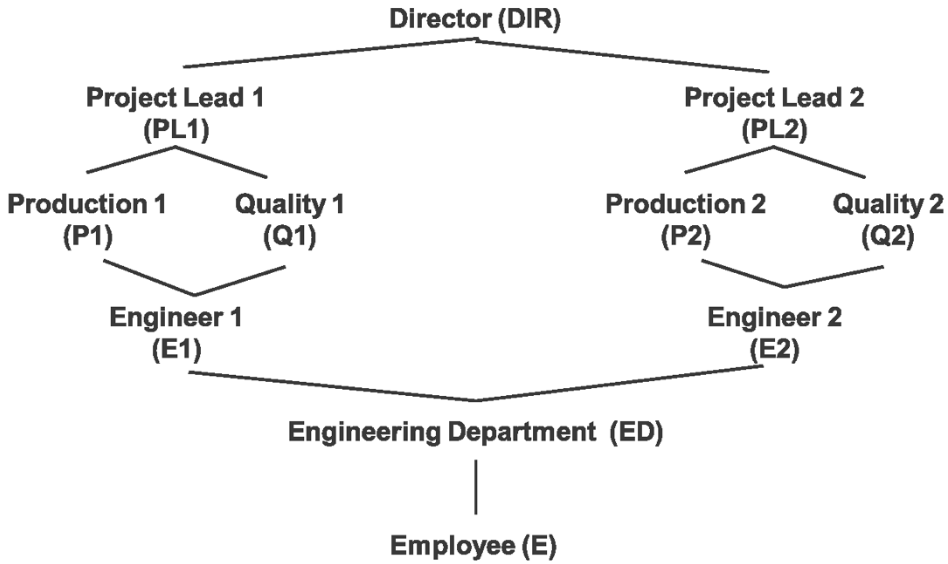
- Security method to manage conflict of interest and fraud
- Restricts the power held by an individual
- Example:
  - Accounting Employee A: Maintains cash balances per books
  - Assistant Cashier B: Maintains custody of cash on hand
  - Assistant control C: Makes monthly comparisons: reports any differences to the controller
  - A ← Separation of Duties→ B

The RBAC model



Family of RBAC models

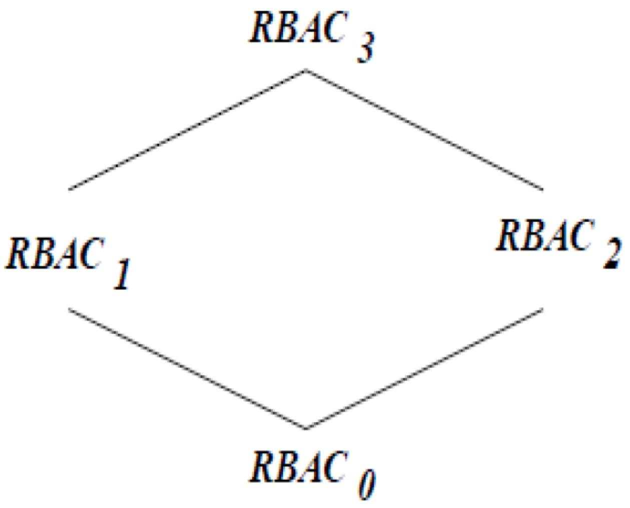
- Hierarchical
  - Support of hierarchies
  - Senior roles on top
  - Junior roles at the bottom



- Support of Constraints
  - Static separation of duties
  - Dynamic separation of duties

Family of RBAC models

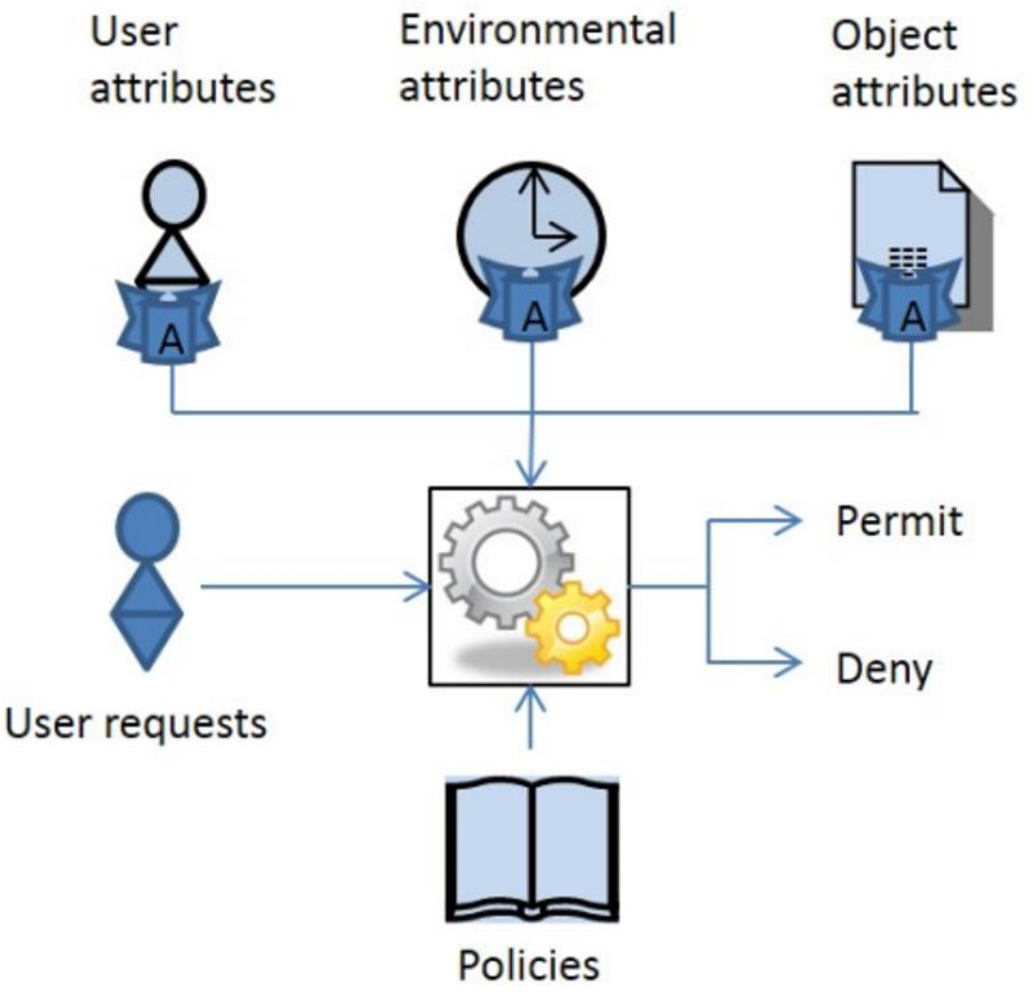
Models	Hierarchies	Constraints
$RBAC_0$	No	No
$RBAC_1$	Yes	No
$RBAC_2$	No	Yes
$RBAC_3$	Yes	Yes



Attribute based access control (ABAC)

- Logical access control methodology
- Authorisations are determined by evaluating attributes of elements, including environment conditions against rules.
- Standards proposed by NIST in Special Publication 800-162 (https://csrc.nist.gov/publications/detail/sp/800-162/final)

ABAC mechanism



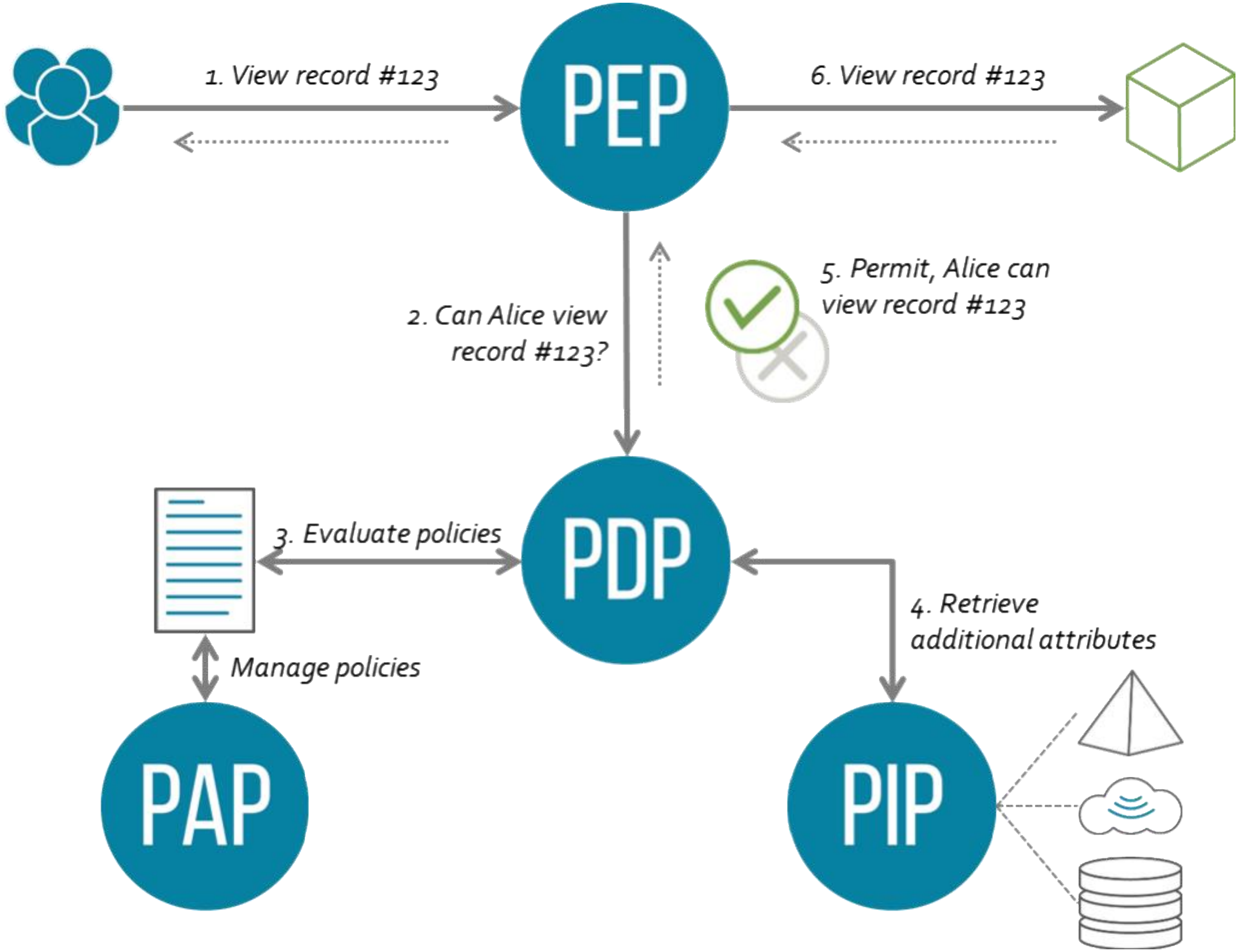
ABAC Frameworks

- Frameworks provide useful guidelines when considering implementation of AC systems

- Main ABAC frameworks
  - Extensible Access Control Markup Language (XACML)
  - Next Generation Access Control (NGAC)

- Provide operations to manage policies, evaluate decision, enforce policies, etc.

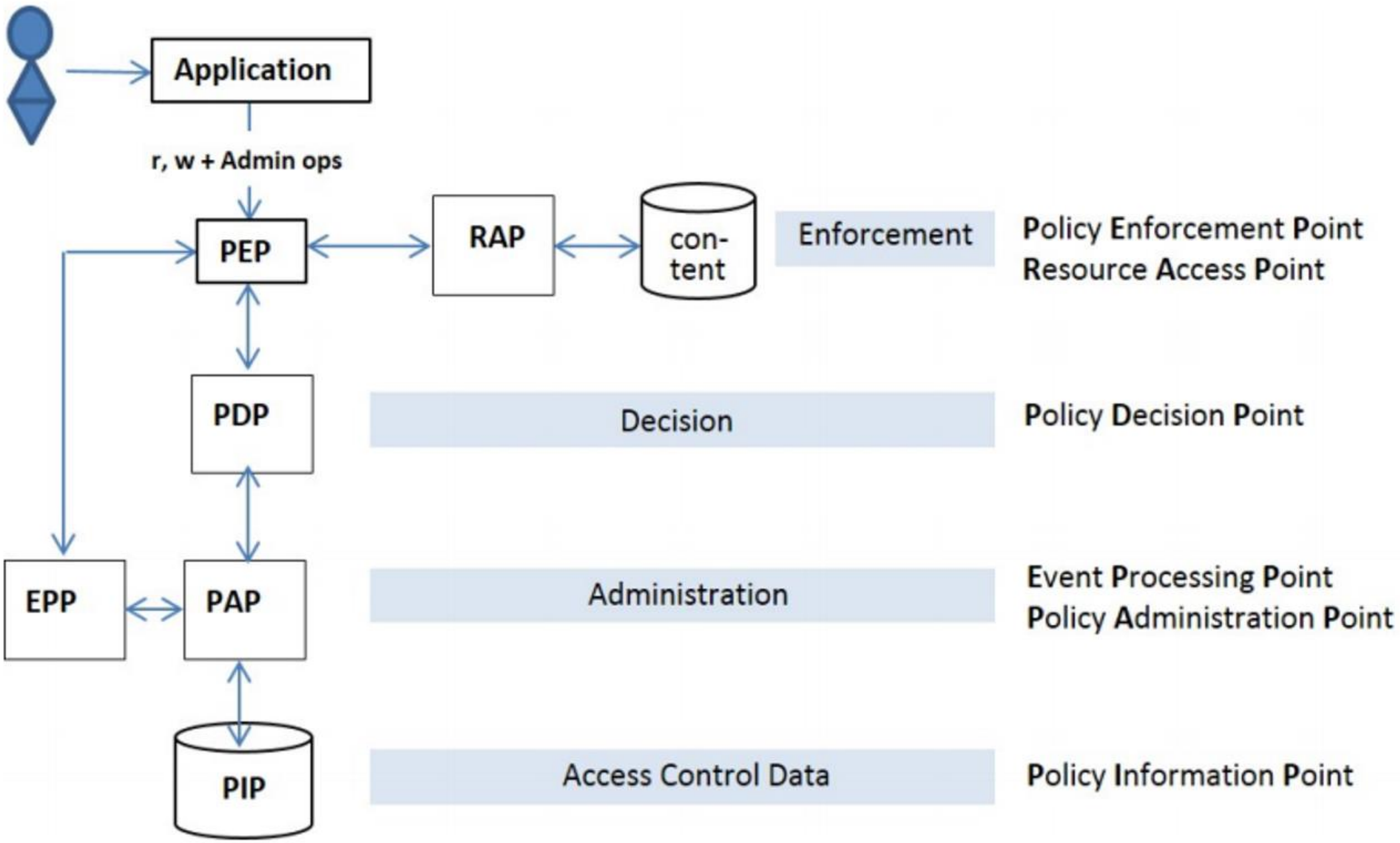
XACML Reference architecture


1. View record #123
PEP
6. View record #123
2. Can Alice view record #123?
5. Permit, Alice can view record #123
3. Evaluate policies
PDP
4. Retrieve additional attributes
Manage policies
PAP
PIP

NGAC

- An attempt to standardise the ABAC mechanism
- Initiated by NIST
- Able to express and enforce a wide range of policies and defined in accordance to ABAC to meet its requirements
- Uses data/relations and attributes to express policies and deliver capabilities, respectively
- Core model available at: https://github.com/usnistgov/policy-machine-core

NGAC standard function architecture



Questions?

References

- Security Engineering, Chapter on Access Control, https://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~rja14/book.html
- All in one - CISSP, 5th edition, Chapter 4: Access Control
- NIST SP 800-162 https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/specialpublications/NIST.SP.800-162.pdf
- NIST SP 800-178 https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.800-178.pdf
- ANSI INCITS 359-2004 https://www.cs.purdue.edu/homes/ninghui/readings/AccessControl/ANSI+INCITS+359-2004.pdf