# Linking

15-213/18-213/15-513: Introduction to Computer Systems 14<sup>th</sup> Lecture, July 1, 2020

# **Today**

- Linking
  - Motivation
  - What it does
  - How it works
  - Dynamic linking
- Case study: Library interpositioning

# **Example C Program**

```
int sum(int *a, int n);
int array[2] = {1, 2};
int main(int argc, char** argv)
{
   int val = sum(array, 2);
   return val;
}

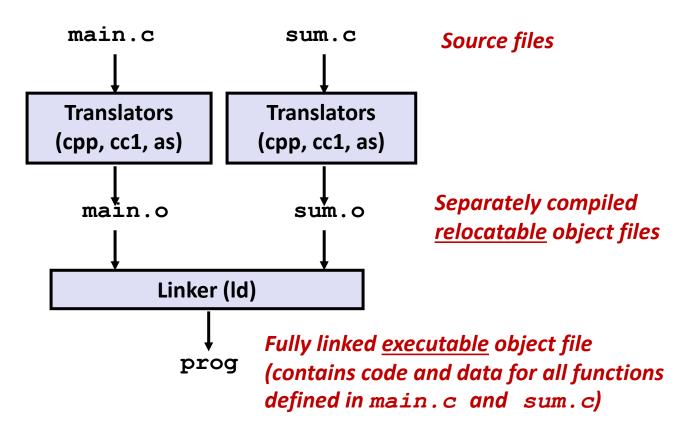
main.c
```

```
int sum(int *a, int n)
{
   int i, s = 0;

   for (i = 0; i < n; i++) {
       s += a[i];
   }
   return s;
}</pre>
```

# Linking

- Programs are translated and linked using a compiler driver:
  - linux> gcc -Og -o prog main.c sum.c
  - linux> ./prog



# Why Linkers?

- Reason 1: Modularity
  - Program can be written as a collection of smaller source files, rather than one monolithic mass.
  - Can build libraries of common functions (more on this later)
    - e.g., Math library, standard C library

# Why Linkers? (cont)

### Reason 2: Efficiency

- Time: Separate compilation
  - Change one source file, compile, and then relink.
  - No need to recompile other source files.
  - Can compile multiple files concurrently.
- Space: Libraries
  - Common functions can be aggregated into a single file...
  - Option 1: Static Linking
    - Executable files and running memory images contain only the library code they actually use
  - Option 2: Dynamic linking
    - Executable files contain no library code
    - During execution, single copy of library code can be shared across all executing processes

### What Do Linkers Do?

### Step 1: Symbol resolution

Programs define and reference symbols (global variables and functions):

```
void swap() {...} /* define symbol swap */
swap(); /* reference symbol swap */
int *xp = &x; /* define symbol xp, reference x */
```

- Symbol definitions are stored in object file (by assembler) in symbol table.
  - Symbol table is an array of entries
  - Each entry includes name, size, and location of symbol.
- During symbol resolution step, the linker associates each symbol reference with exactly one symbol definition.

### Symbols in Example C Program

#### **Definitions**

```
int sum(int *a, int n),
int array[2] = {1, 2};
int main(int argc, char** argv)
{
   int val = sum(array, 2);
   return val;
}
```

```
int sum(int *a, int n)
{
   int i, s = 0;

   for (i = 0; i < n; i++) {
       s += a[i];
   }
   return s;
}</pre>
```

Reference

# What Do Linkers Do? (cont'd)

### Step 2: Relocation

- Merges separate code and data sections into single sections
- Relocates symbols from their relative locations in the .o files to their final absolute memory locations in the executable.
- Updates all references to these symbols to reflect their new positions.

### Let's look at these two steps in more detail....

# Three Kinds of Object Files (Modules)

### Relocatable object file ( . o file)

- Contains code and data in a form that can be combined with other relocatable object files to form executable object file.
  - Each . o file is produced from exactly one source (.c) file

### Executable object file (a.out file)

 Contains code and data in a form that can be copied directly into memory and then executed.

### Shared object file (.so file)

- Special type of relocatable object file that can be loaded into memory and linked dynamically, at either load time or run-time.
- Called Dynamic Link Libraries (DLLs) by Windows

# **Executable and Linkable Format (ELF)**

- Standard binary format for object files
- One unified format for
  - Relocatable object files (.o),
  - Executable object files (a.out)
  - Shared object files (.so)
- Generic name: ELF binaries

# **ELF Object File Format**

#### Elf header

 Word size, byte ordering, file type (.o, exec, .so), machine type, etc.

#### Segment header table

 Page size, virtual address memory segments (sections), segment sizes.

#### . text section

Code

#### .rodata section

Read only data: jump tables, string constants, ...

#### .data section

Initialized global variables

#### .bss section

- Uninitialized global variables
- "Block Started by Symbol"
- "Better Save Space"
- Has section header but occupies no space

ELF header
Segment header table (required for executables)
. text section
.rodata section
. data section
. bss section
.symtab section
.rel.txt section
.rel.data section
. debug section
Section header table

# **ELF Object File Format (cont.)**

#### . symtab section

- Symbol table
- Procedure and static variable names
- Section names and locations

#### .rel.text section

- Relocation info for .text section
- Addresses of instructions that will need to be modified in the executable
- Instructions for modifying

#### .rel.data section

- Relocation info for .data section
- Addresses of pointer data that will need to be modified in the merged executable

#### debug section

■ Info for symbolic debugging (gcc -g)

#### Section header table

Offsets and sizes of each section

ELF header
Segment header table (required for executables)
. text section
.rodata section
. data section
.bss section
.symtab section
.rel.txt section
.rel.data section
. debug section
Section header table

# **Linker Symbols**

### Global symbols

- Symbols defined by module m that can be referenced by other modules.
- e.g., non-static C functions and non-static global variables.

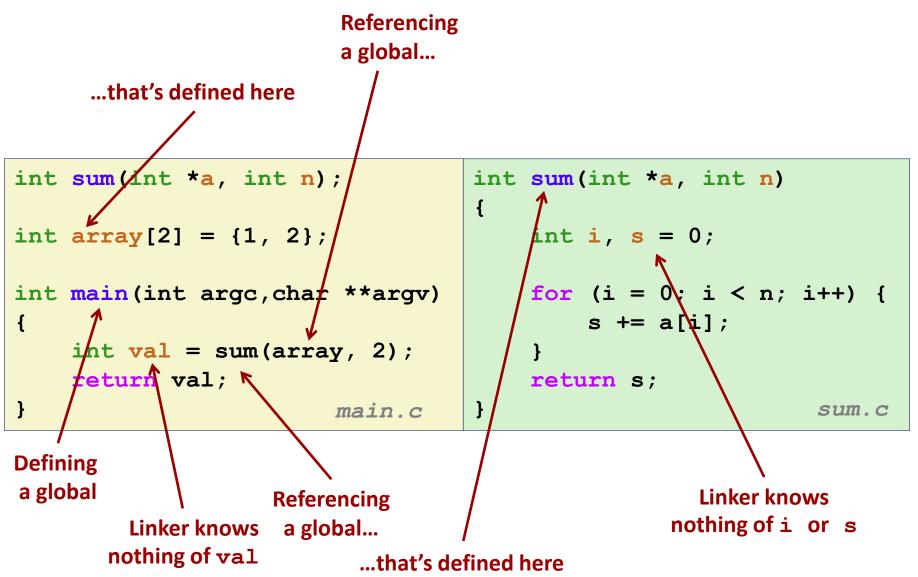
### External symbols

 Global symbols that are referenced by module m but defined by some other module.

### Local symbols

- Symbols that are defined and referenced exclusively by module m.
- e.g, C functions and global variables defined with the **static** attribute.
- Local linker symbols are not local program variables

# **Step 1: Symbol Resolution**



# Symbol Identification

Which of the following names will be in the symbol table of symbols.o?

### symbols.c:

```
int incr = 1;
static int foo(int a) {
  int b = a + incr;
  return b;
int main (int argc,
         char* argv[]) {
 printf("%d\n", foo(5));
  return 0;
```

### Names:

- incr
- foo
- argc
- argv
- main
- printf
- "%d\n"

Can find this with readelf: linux> readelf -s symbols.o

# **Local Symbols**

#### ■ Local non-static C variables vs. local static C variables

- Local non-static C variables: stored on the stack
- Local static C variables: stored in either .bss or .data

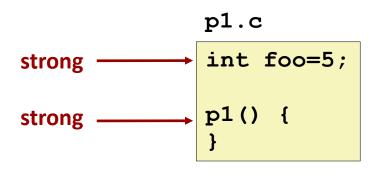
```
static int x = 15;
int f() {
    static int x = 17;
    return x++;
int q() {
    static int x = 19;
    return x += 14;
int h() {
    return x += 27;
        static-local.c
```

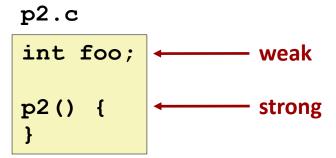
Compiler allocates space in .data for each definition of x

Creates local symbols in the symbol table with unique names, e.g., x, x . 1721 and x . 1724.

# How Linker Resolves Duplicate Symbol Definitions

- Program symbols are either strong or weak
  - Strong: procedures and initialized globals
  - Weak: uninitialized globals
    - Or ones declared with specifier extern





# Linker's Symbol Rules

- Rule 1: Multiple strong symbols are not allowed
  - Each item can be defined only once
  - Otherwise: Linker error
- Rule 2: Given a strong symbol and multiple weak symbols, choose the strong symbol
  - References to the weak symbol resolve to the strong symbol
- Rule 3: If there are multiple weak symbols, pick an arbitrary one
  - Can override this with gcc -fno-common
- Puzzles on the next slide

### **Linker Puzzles**

```
int x;
p1() {}
```

Link time error: two strong symbols (p1)

```
int x;
p1() {}
```

References to **x** will refer to the same uninitialized int. Is this what you really want?

```
int x;
int y;
p1() {}
```

Writes to **x** in **p2** might overwrite **y**! Evil!

```
int x=7;
int y=5;
p1() {}
```

Writes to **x** in **p2** might overwrite **y**! Nasty!

References to **x** will refer to the same initialized variable.

Important: Linker does not do type checking.

# **Type Mismatch Example**

- Compiles without any errors or warnings
- What gets printed?

```
-bash-4.2$ ./mismatch
4614253070214989087
```

### **Global Variables**

### Avoid if you can

#### Otherwise

- Use static if you can
- Initialize if you define a global variable
- Use extern if you reference an external global variable
  - Treated as weak symbol
  - But also causes linker error if not defined in some file

# Use of extern in .h Files (#1)

#### c1.c

```
#include "global.h"
int f() {
  return g+1;
}
```

### global.h

```
extern int g;
int f();
```

### c2.c

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include "global.h"

int g = 0;

int main(int argc, char argv[]) {
   int t = f();
   printf("Calling f yields %d\n", t);
   return 0;
}
```

# **Linking Example**

```
int sum(int *a, int n);
int array[2] = {1, 2};
int main(int argc,char **argv)
{
    int val = sum(array, 2);
    return val;
}

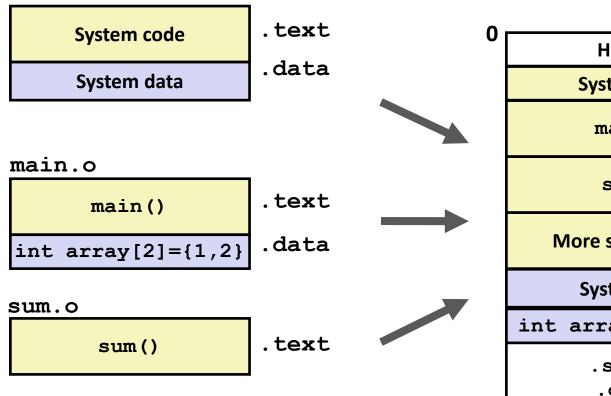
int sum(int *a, int n)
{
    int i, s = 0;

    for (i = 0; i < n; i++) {
        s += a[i];
    }
    return s;
}

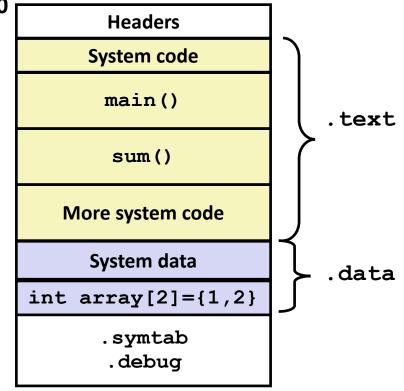
sum.c</pre>
```

# **Step 2: Relocation**

### **Relocatable Object Files**



### **Executable Object File**



### **Relocation Entries**

```
int array[2] = {1, 2};
int main(int argc, char**
argv)
{
   int val = sum(array, 2);
   return val;
}
```

```
0000000000000000 <main>:
  0: 48 83 ec 08
                                    $0x8,%rsp
                              sub
  4: be 02 00 00 00
                                    $0x2,%esi
                             mov
                                    $0x0, %edi  # %edi = &array
  9: bf 00 00 00 00
                             mov
                      a: R X86 64 32 array
                                                  # Relocation entry
       e8 00 00 00 00
                              callq 13 < main + 0x13 > \# sum()
  e:
                      f: R X86 64 PC32 sum-0x4 # Relocation entry
 13: 48 83 c4 08
                              add
                                    $0x8,%rsp
 17:
    c3
                              retq
                                                              main.o
```

### Relocated .text section

```
00000000004004d0 <main>:
 4004d0:
                48 83 ec 08
                                         $0x8,%rsp
                                  sub
 4004d4:
                be 02 00 00 00
                                         $0x2,%esi
                                  mov
                                         $0x601018, %edi # %edi = &array
 4004d9:
               bf 18 10 60 00
                                  mov
 4004de:
                e8 05 00 00 00
                                         4004e8 <sum>
                                                          # sum()
                                  callq
 4004e3:
               48 83 c4 08
                                         $0x8,%rsp
                                  add
 4004e7:
                c3
                                  reta
00000000004004e8 <sum>:
 4004e8:
                b8 00 00 00 00
                                                $0x0, %eax
                                        mov
               ba 00 00 00 00
                                                $0x0,%edx
 4004ed:
                                        mov
                                                4004fd < sum + 0x15 >
 4004f2:
                eb 09
                                        jmp
 4004f4:
               48 63 ca
                                        movslq %edx,%rcx
                03 04 8f
 4004f7:
                                        add
                                               (%rdi,%rcx,4),%eax
 4004fa:
               83 c2 01
                                        add
                                               $0x1, %edx
 4004fd:
                39 £2
                                               %esi,%edx
                                        cmp
 4004ff:
                7c f3
                                               4004f4 < sum + 0xc >
                                        il
 400501:
                f3 c3
                                        repz retq
```

#### callq instruction uses PC-relative addressing for sum():

0x4004e8 = 0x4004e3 + 0x5

# **Loading Executable Object Files**

#### **Executable Object File**

	- "1
ELF header	°
Program header table (required for executables)	
.init section	
.text section	
.rodata section	
.data section	
.bss section	
.symtab	
.debug	
.line	
.strtab	
Section header table (required for relocatables)	

Memory invisible to **Kernel virtual memory** user code User stack (created at runtime) %rsp (stack pointer) Memory-mapped region for shared libraries brk Run-time heap (created by malloc) Loaded Read/write data segment from (.data, .bss) the **Read-only code segment** executable (.init,.text,.rodata) file Unused

0x400000

### **Quiz Time!**

Check out:

https://canvas.cmu.edu/courses/16836

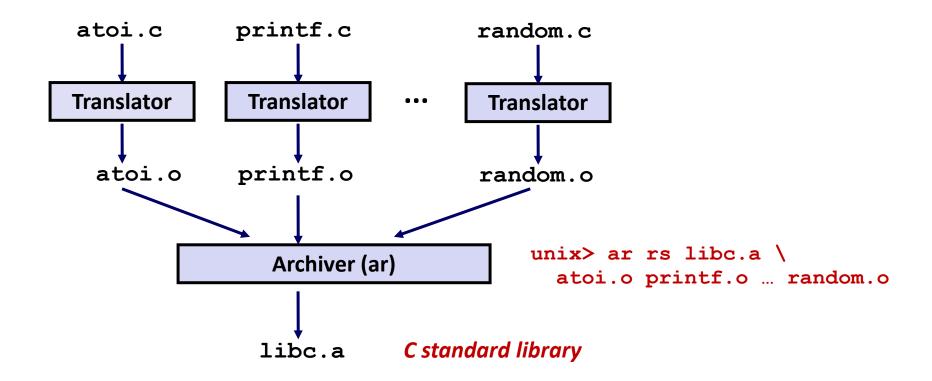
# Libraries: Packaging a Set of Functions

- How to package functions commonly used by programmers?
  - Math, I/O, memory management, string manipulation, etc.
- Awkward, given the linker framework so far:
  - Option 1: Put all functions into a single source file
    - Programmers link big object file into their programs
    - Space and time inefficient
  - Option 2: Put each function in a separate source file
    - Programmers explicitly link appropriate binaries into their programs
    - More efficient, but burdensome on the programmer

### **Old-Fashioned Solution: Static Libraries**

- Static libraries (.a archive files)
  - Concatenate related relocatable object files into a single file with an index (called an archive).
  - Enhance linker so that it tries to resolve unresolved external references by looking for the symbols in one or more archives.
  - If an archive member file resolves reference, link it into the executable.

# **Creating Static Libraries**



- Archiver allows incremental updates
- Recompile function that changes and replace .o file in archive.

### **Commonly Used Libraries**

#### libc.a (the C standard library)

- 4.6 MB archive of 1496 object files.
- I/O, memory allocation, signal handling, string handling, data and time, random numbers, integer math

#### libm. a (the C math library)

- 2 MB archive of 444 object files.
- floating point math (sin, cos, tan, log, exp, sqrt, ...)

```
% ar -t /usr/lib/libc.a | sort
...
fork.o
...
fprintf.o
fpu_control.o
fputc.o
freopen.o
fscanf.o
fseek.o
fstab.o
...
```

```
% ar -t /usr/lib/libm.a | sort
...
e_acos.o
e_acosf.o
e_acosh.o
e_acoshf.o
e_acoshl.o
e_acosl.o
e_asin.o
e_asinf.o
e_asinf.o
e_asinf.o
```

# Linking with Static Libraries

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include "vector.h"
int x[2] = \{1, 2\};
int y[2] = \{3, 4\};
int z[2];
int main(int argc, char**
argv)
{
    addvec(x, y, z, 2);
    printf("z = [%d %d] \n",
           z[0], z[1]);
    return 0;
                    main2.c
```

#### libvector.a

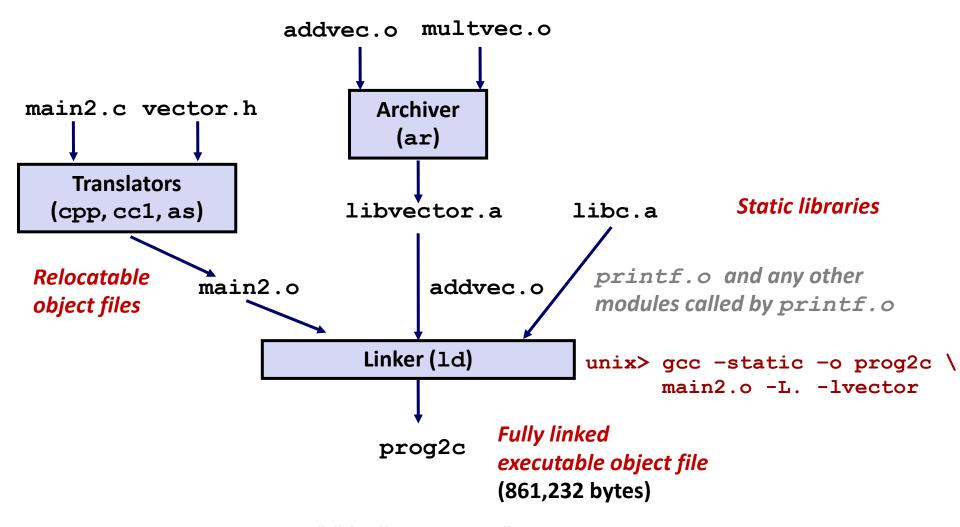
for (i = 0; i < n; i++)

}

z[i] = x[i] \* y[i];

multvec.c

# **Linking with Static Libraries**



"c" for "compile-time"

# **Using Static Libraries**

### ■ Linker's algorithm for resolving external references:

- Scan .o files and .a files in the command line order.
- During the scan, keep a list of the current unresolved references.
- As each new .o or .a file, obj, is encountered, try to resolve each unresolved reference in the list against the symbols defined in obj.
- If any entries in the unresolved list at end of scan, then error.

#### Problem:

- Command line order matters!
- Moral: put libraries at the end of the command line.

```
unix> gcc -static -o prog2c -L. -lvector main2.o
main2.o: In function `main':
main2.c:(.text+0x19): undefined reference to `addvec'
collect2: error: ld returned 1 exit status
```

## **Modern Solution: Shared Libraries**

#### Static libraries have the following disadvantages:

- Duplication in the stored executables (every function needs libc)
- Duplication in the running executables
- Minor bug fixes of system libraries require each application to explicitly relink
  - Rebuild everything with glibc?
  - https://security.googleblog.com/2016/02/cve-2015-7547-glibcgetaddrinfo-stack.html

#### Modern solution: shared libraries

- Object files that contain code and data that are loaded and linked into an application dynamically, at either load-time or run-time
- Also called: dynamic link libraries, DLLs, .so files

## **Shared Libraries (cont.)**

- Dynamic linking can occur when executable is first loaded and run (load-time linking)
  - Common case for Linux, handled automatically by the dynamic linker (ld-linux.so)
  - Standard C library (libc.so) usually dynamically linked
- Dynamic linking can also occur after program has begun (run-time linking)
  - In Linux, this is done by calls to the dlopen () interface
    - Distributing software
    - High-performance web servers
    - Runtime library interpositioning
- Shared library routines can be shared by multiple processes
  - More on this when we learn about virtual memory

## What dynamic libraries are required?

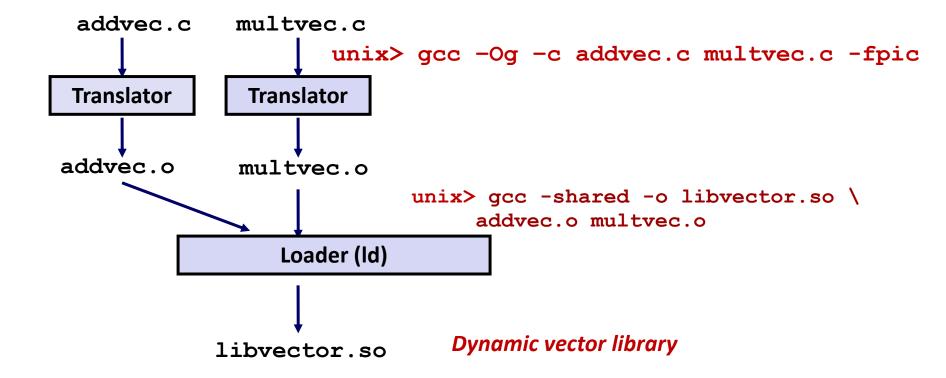
- .interp section
  - Specifies the dynamic linker to use (i.e., ld-linux.so)
- .dynamic section
  - Specifies the names, etc of the dynamic libraries to use
  - Follow an example of prog

```
(NEEDED) Shared library: [libm.so.6]
```

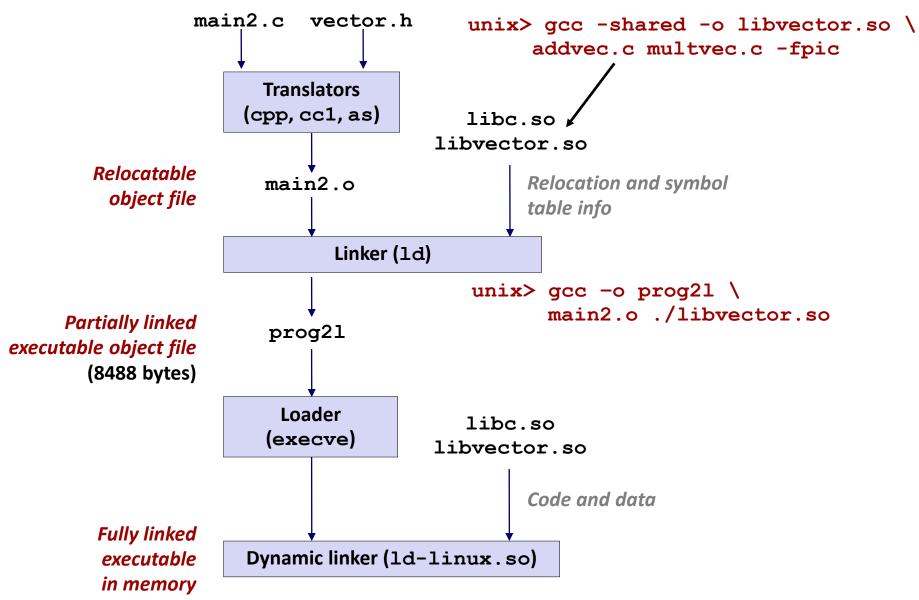
- Where are the libraries found?
  - Use "ldd" to find out:

```
unix> ldd prog
  linux-vdso.so.1 => (0x00007ffcf2998000)
  libc.so.6 => /lib/x86_64-linux-gnu/libc.so.6 (0x00007f99ad927000)
  /lib64/ld-linux-x86-64.so.2 (0x00007f99adcef000)
```

## **Dynamic Library Example**



## **Dynamic Linking at Load-time**



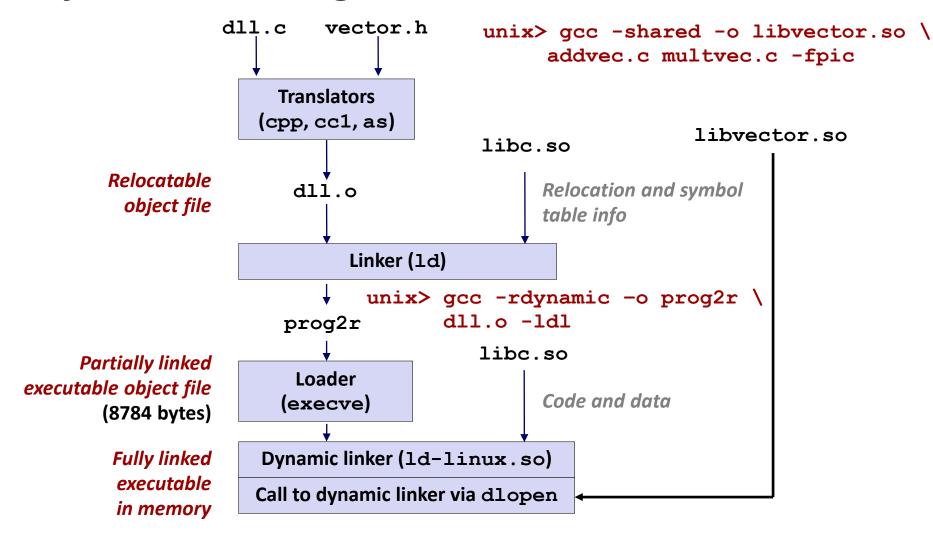
## **Dynamic Linking at Run-time**

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <dlfcn.h>
int x[2] = \{1, 2\};
int y[2] = \{3, 4\};
int z[2];
int main(int argc, char** argv)
{
   void *handle;
   void (*addvec)(int *, int *, int *, int);
    char *error;
    /* Dynamically load the shared library that contains addvec() */
    handle = dlopen("./libvector.so", RTLD LAZY);
    if (!handle) {
        fprintf(stderr, "%s\n", dlerror());
       exit(1);
                                                                 d11.c
```

## Dynamic Linking at Run-time (cont'd)

```
/* Get a pointer to the addvec() function we just loaded */
addvec = dlsym(handle, "addvec");
if ((error = dlerror()) != NULL) {
    fprintf(stderr, "%s\n", error);
    exit(1);
/* Now we can call addvec() just like any other function */
addvec(x, y, z, 2);
printf("z = [%d %d] \n", z[0], z[1]);
/* Unload the shared library */
if (dlclose(handle) < 0) {</pre>
    fprintf(stderr, "%s\n", dlerror());
    exit(1);
return 0;
                                                        dll.c
```

## **Dynamic Linking at Run-time**



## **Linking Summary**

- Linking is a technique that allows programs to be constructed from multiple object files
- Linking can happen at different times in a program's lifetime:
  - Compile time (when a program is compiled)
  - Load time (when a program is loaded into memory)
  - Run time (while a program is executing)
- Understanding linking can help you avoid nasty errors and make you a better programmer

## **Today**

- Linking
- Case study: Library interpositioning

## **Case Study: Library Interpositioning**

- Documented in Section 7.13 of book
- Library interpositioning: powerful linking technique that allows programmers to intercept calls to arbitrary functions
- Interpositioning can occur at:
  - Compile time: When the source code is compiled
  - Link time: When the relocatable object files are statically linked to form an executable object file
  - Load/run time: When an executable object file is loaded into memory, dynamically linked, and then executed.

## **Some Interpositioning Applications**

#### Security

- Confinement (sandboxing)
- Behind the scenes encryption

#### Debugging

- In 2014, two Facebook engineers debugged a treacherous 1-year old bug in their iPhone app using interpositioning
- Code in the SPDY networking stack was writing to the wrong location
- Solved by intercepting calls to Posix write functions (write, writev, pwrite)

Source: Facebook engineering blog post at:

https://code.facebook.com/posts/313033472212144/debugging-file-corruption-on-ios/

## Some Interpositioning Applications

#### Monitoring and Profiling

- Count number of calls to functions
- Characterize call sites and arguments to functions
- Malloc tracing
  - Detecting memory leaks
  - Generating address traces

#### Error Checking

- C Programming Lab used customized versions of malloc/free to do careful error checking
- Other labs (malloc, shell, proxy) also use interpositioning to enhance checking capabilities

## **Example program**

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <malloc.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
int main(int argc,
         char *arqv[])
  int i;
  for (i = 1; i < argc; i++) {
    void *p =
          malloc(atoi(arqv[i]));
    free(p);
  return(0);
                             int.c
```

- Goal: trace the addresses and sizes of the allocated and freed blocks, without breaking the program, and without modifying the source code.
- Three solutions: interpose on the library malloc and free functions at compile time, link time, and load/run time.

## **Compile-time Interpositioning**

```
#ifdef COMPILETIME
#include <stdio.h>
#include <malloc.h>
/* malloc wrapper function */
void *mymalloc(size t size)
    void *ptr = malloc(size);
    printf("malloc(%d)=%p\n", (int)size, ptr);
    return ptr;
/* free wrapper function */
void myfree(void *ptr)
    free (ptr) ;
    printf("free(%p)\n", ptr);
#endif
                                                     mymalloc.c
```

## **Compile-time Interpositioning**

```
#define malloc(size) mymalloc(size)
#define free(ptr) myfree(ptr)
void *mymalloc(size t size);
void myfree(void *ptr);
                                                            malloc.h
linux> make into
qcc -Wall -DCOMPILETIME -c mymalloc.c
gcc -Wall -I. -o intc int.c mymalloc.o
linux> make runc
./intc 10 100 1000
                               Search for <malloc.h> leads to
malloc(10) = 0 \times 1 ba 70 \sqrt{0}
                               /usr/include/malloc.h
free (0x1ba7010)
malloc(100) = 0x1ba7030
free (0x1ba7030)
malloc(1000) = 0x1ba70a0
                             Search for <malloc.h> leads to
free (0x1ba70a0)
linux>
```

## **Link-time Interpositioning**

```
#ifdef LINKTIME
#include <stdio.h>
void * real malloc(size t size);
void real free(void *ptr);
/* malloc wrapper function */
void * wrap malloc(size t size)
   void *ptr = real malloc(size); /* Call libc malloc */
   printf("malloc(%d) = %p\n", (int)size, ptr);
    return ptr;
/* free wrapper function */
void wrap free(void *ptr)
    real free (ptr); /* Call libc free */
   printf("free(%p)\n", ptr);
#endif
```

## **Link-time Interpositioning**

```
linux> make intl
gcc -Wall -DLINKTIME -c mymalloc.c
gcc -Wall -c int.c
gcc -Wall -Wl, --wrap, malloc -Wl, --wrap, free -o intl \
   int.o mymalloc.o
linux> make runl
./intl 10 100 1000
malloc(10) = 0x91a010
free(0x91a010)
. . . .
```

- The "-W1" flag passes argument to linker, replacing each comma with a space.
- The "--wrap, malloc" arg instructs linker to resolve references in a special way:
  - Refs to malloc should be resolved as \_\_wrap\_malloc
  - Refs to real malloc should be resolved as malloc

# Load/Run-time Interpositioning

```
#ifdef RUNTIME
                                           Interpositioning
#define GNU SOURCE
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
                            Observe that DON'T have
#include <dlfcn.h>
                            #include <malloc.h>
/* malloc wrapper function */
void *malloc(size t size)
   void *(*mallocp)(size t size);
    char *error:
   mallocp = dlsym(RTLD NEXT, "malloc"); /* Get addr of libc malloc */
    if ((error = dlerror()) != NULL) {
        fputs(error, stderr);
       exit(1);
    char *ptr = mallocp(size); /* Call libc malloc */
   printf("malloc(%d) = %p\n", (int)size, ptr);
    return ptr;
                                                            mymalloc.c
```

# Load/Run-time Interpositioning

```
/* free wrapper function */
void free(void *ptr)
   void (*freep) (void *) = NULL;
    char *error;
    if (!ptr)
        return;
    freep = dlsym(RTLD NEXT, "free"); /* Get address of libc free */
    if ((error = dlerror()) != NULL) {
        fputs(error, stderr);
        exit(1);
    freep(ptr); /* Call libc free */
   printf("free(%p)\n", ptr);
#endif
```

mymalloc.c

# Load/Run-time Interpositioning

```
linux> make intr
gcc -Wall -DRUNTIME -shared -fpic -o mymalloc.so mymalloc.c -ldl
gcc -Wall -o intr int.c
linux> make runr
(LD_PRELOAD="./mymalloc.so" ./intr 10 100 1000)
malloc(10) = 0x91a010
free(0x91a010)
. . .
linux>
Search for <malloc.h> leads to
/usr/include/malloc.h
```

- The LD\_PRELOAD environment variable tells the dynamic linker to resolve unresolved refs (e.g., to malloc) by looking in mymalloc.so first.
- Type into (some) shells as:

```
env LD_PRELOAD=./mymalloc.so ./intr 10 100 1000)
```

## **Interpositioning Recap**

#### Compile Time

- Apparent calls to malloc/free get macro-expanded into calls to mymalloc/myfree
- Simple approach. Must have access to source & recompile

#### Link Time

- Use linker trick to have special name resolutions
  - malloc → wrap malloc
  - real\_malloc → malloc

### Load/Run Time

- Implement custom version of malloc/free that use dynamic linking to load library malloc/free under different names
- Can use with ANY dynamically linked binary

```
env LD_PRELOAD=./mymalloc.so gcc -c int.c)
```

## **Linking Recap**

- Usually: Just happens, no big deal
- Sometimes: Strange errors
  - Bad symbol resolution
  - Ordering dependence of linked .o, .a, and .so files
- For power users:
  - Interpositioning to trace programs with & without source