# Access Control and Privacy Policies (3)


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first lecture

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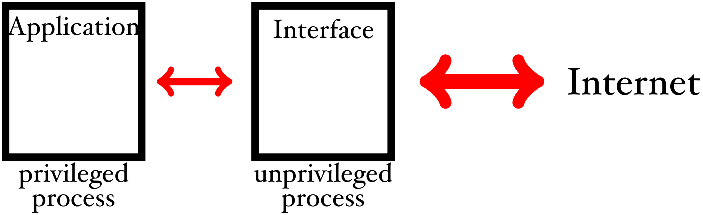
today

# Network Applications: Privilege Separation




- the idea is make the attack surface smaller and mitigate the consequences of an attack

# Access Control in Unix

- access control provided by the OS
- authenticate principals (login)
- mediate access to files, ports, processes according to roles (user ids)
- roles get attached with privileges

> The principle of least privilege:
> programs should only have as much privilege as they need

# A “Cron”-Attack

1. **attacker** (creates a fake passwd file)
   mkdir /tmp/a; cat > /tmp/a/passwd
2. **root** (does the daily cleaning)
   rm /tmp/*/*

   records that /tmp/a/passwd
   should be deleted, but does not do it yet

3. **attacker** (meanwhile deletes the fake passwd file, and establishes a link to the real passwd file)
   rm /tmp/a/passwd; rmdir /tmp/a;
   ln -s /etc /tmp/a
4. **root now deletes the real passwd file**

# A "Cron"-Attack

1. **attacker** (creates a fake passwd file)
   mkdir /tmp/a; cat > /tmp/a/passwd
2. **ro**
   rn

   To prevent this kind of attack, you need additional policies (don't do such operations as root).

   should be deleted, but does not do it yet
3. **attacker** (meanwhile deletes the fake passwd file, and establishes a link to the real passwd file)
   rm /tmp/a/passwd; rmdir /tmp/a;
   ln -s /etc /tmp/a
4. **root now deletes the real passwd file**

# Smash the Stack for Fun ...

- "smashing the stack attacks" or "buffer overflow attacks"
- one of the most popular attacks ($>$ 50% of security incidents reported at CERT are related to buffer overflows)

  http://www.kb.cert.org/vuls
- made popular in an article by Elias Levy (also known as Aleph One):

  **"Smashing The Stack For Fun and Profit"**

  Issue 49, Article 14

# A Float Printed “Twice”

```
void foo (char *bar)
{
  float my_float = 10.5;  // in hex: \x41\x28\x00\x00
  char  buffer[28];

  printf(”my float value = %f\n”, my_float);
  strcpy(buffer, bar);
  printf(”my float value = %f\n”, my_float);
}

int main (int argc, char **argv)
{
  foo(”my string is too long !!!!! ”);
  return 0;
}
```

# The Problem

- The basic problem is that library routines in C look as follows:

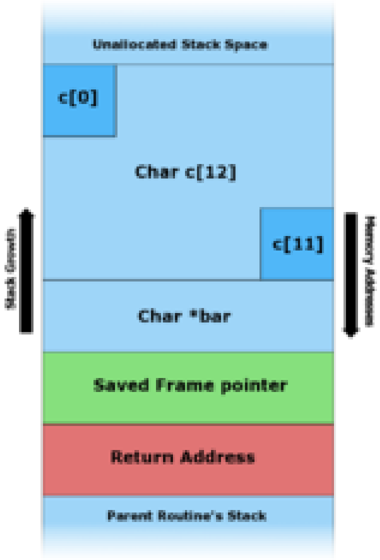
```
void strcpy(char *src, char *dst) {
  int i = 0;
  while (src[i] != ”\0”) {
    dst[i] = src[i];
    i = i + 1;
  }
}
```

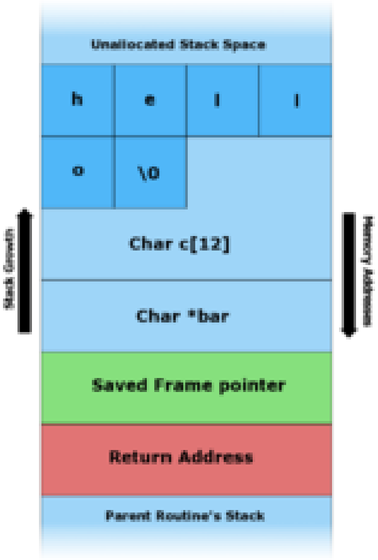
- the resulting problems are often remotely exploitable
- can be used to circumvents all access control (for grooming botnets for further attacks)

# Variants

There are many variants:

- return-to-lib-C attacks
- heap-smashing attacks
  (Slammer Worm in 2003 infected 90% of vulnerable systems within 10 minutes)
- “zero-days-attacks” (new unknown vulnerability)


Unallocated Stack Space
c[0]
Char c[12]
c[11]
Char *bar
Saved Frame pointer
Return Address
Parent Routine's Stack
Stack Growth
Memory Addresses


Unallocated Stack Space
h
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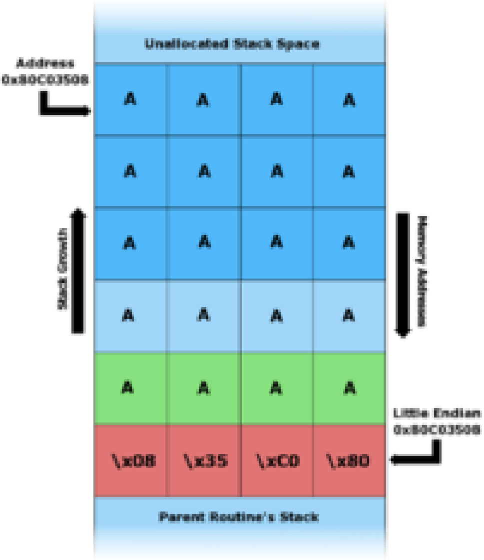
Unallocated Stack Space
Address
0x80C03508
A A A A
A A A A
A A A A
A A A A
A A A A
\x08 \x35 \xC0 \x80
Stack Growth
Memory Addresses
Little Endian
0x80C03508
Parent Routine's Stack

```c
int match(char *s1, char *s2) {
  while( *s1 != ’\0’ && *s2 != ’\0’ && *s1 == *s2 ){
    s1++; s2++;
  }
  return( *s1 - *s2 );
}

void welcome() { printf(”Welcome to the Machine!\n”); exit(0); }
void goodbye() { printf(”Invalid identity, exiting!\n”); exit(1); }

main(){
  char name[8];
  char pw[8];

  printf(”login: ”);
  get_line(name);
  printf(”password: ”);
  get_line(pw);

  if(match(name, pw) == 0)
    welcome();
  else
    goodbye();
}
```

A programmer might be careful, but still introduce vulnerabilities:

```c
// Since gets() is insecure and produces lots of warnings,
// I use my own input function instead.
char ch;
int i;

void get_line(char *dst) {
  char buffer[8];
  i = 0;
  while ((ch = getchar()) != '\n') {
    buffer[i++] = ch;
  }
  buffer[i] = '\0';
  strcpy(dst, buffer);
}
```

# Payloads

- the idea is you store some code to the buffer
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- you then override the return address to execute this payload
- normally you start a root-shell
- difficulty is to guess the right place where to "jump"

# Payloads (2)

- another difficulty is that the code is not allowed to contain \x00:

$$\text{xorl \%eax, \%eax}$$

```
void strcpy(char *src, char *dst) {
  int i = 0;
  while (src[i] != ”\0”) {
    dst[i] = src[i];
    i = i + 1;
  }
}
```

# Format String Vulnerability

string is nowhere used:

```
#include<stdio.h>
#include<string.h>

// a program that just prints the argument
// on the command line
//
// try and run it with %s


main(int argc, char **argv)
{
        char *string = ”This is a secret string\n”;

        printf(argv[1]);
}
```

this vulnerability can be used to read out the stack

# Protections against BO Attacks

- use safe library functions
- ensure stack data is not executable (can be defeated)
- address space randomisation (makes one-size-fits-all more difficult)
- choice of programming language (one of the selling points of Java)

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- Authenticity (needed for access control)
- Integrity (prevent unwanted modification or tampering)
- Availability and reliability (reduce the risk of DoS attacks)

# Homework

- Assume format string attacks allow you to read out the stack. What can you do with this information?
- Assume you can crash a program remotely. Why is this a problem?