CS 370: Computer Organization

Overflow, Worms, and Viruses

Instructor:
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x86-64 Linux Memory Layout

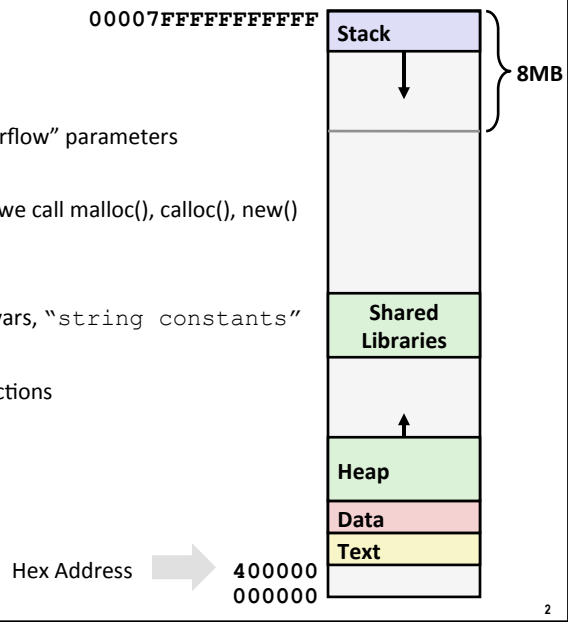
not drawn to scale

Stack
- Runtime stack (8MB limit)
- Stores local variables, "overflow" parameters

Heap
- allocated as needed when we call malloc(), calloc(), new()

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

Text / Shared Libraries
- Executable machine instructions
- Read-only



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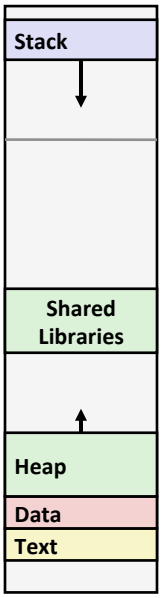
Memory Allocation Example

```
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?

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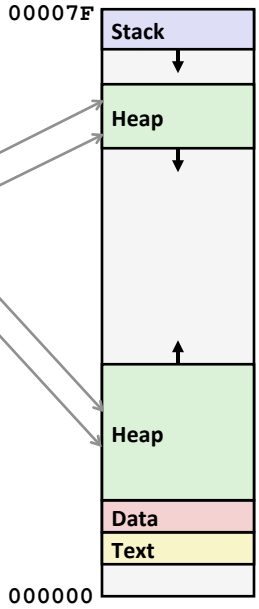
x86-64 Example Addresses

address range ~2^{47}

local	0x00007ffe4d3be87c
p1	0x00007f7262a1e010
p3	0x00007f7162a1d010
p4	0x000000008359d120
p2	0x000000008359d010
big_array	0x0000000080601060
huge_array	0x0000000000601060
main()	0x000000000040060c
useless()	0x0000000000400590



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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;
}
```

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

- Result is system specific

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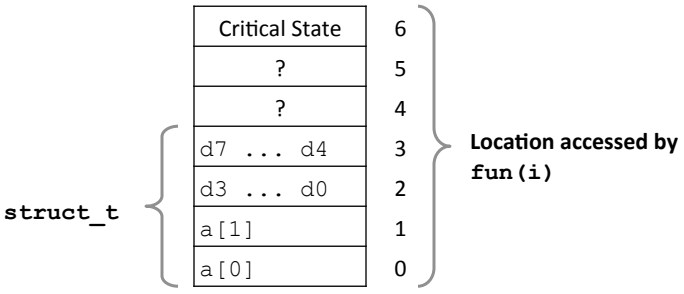
Memory Referencing Bug Example

```
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:



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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
- **Common forms**
  - Unchecked lengths on string inputs
  - Bounded character arrays on the stack
- Buffer overruns on the stack sometimes referred to as **stack smashing**

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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

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Vulnerable Buffer Code

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

←btw, how big is big enough?

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

```
unix>./bufdemo-nsp
Type a string:0123456789012345678901 23
0123456789012345678901 23
```

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

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Buffer Overflow Disassembly

echo:

```
00000000004006cf <echo>:
 4006cf:  48 83 ec 18           sub    $0x18,%rsp
 4006d3:  48 89 e7              mov    %rsp,%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>
  4006f6:  48 83 c4 08          add    $0x8,%rsp
  4006fa:  c3                   retq
```

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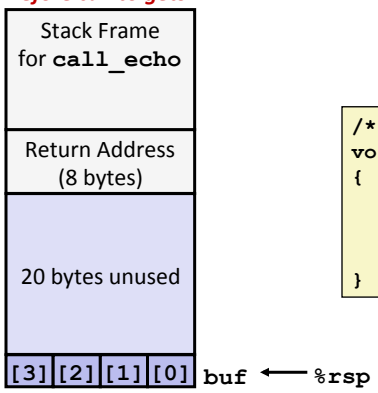
Buffer Overflow Stack

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
  . . .
```

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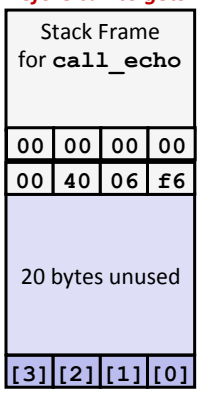
Buffer Overflow Stack Example

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
  . . .
```

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Buffer Overflow Stack Example #1

After call to gets

Stack Frame for `call_echo`

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:0123456789012345678901 2
0123456789012345678901
```

Overflowed buffer, but did not corrupt state

Buffer Overflow Stack Example #2

After call to gets

Stack Frame for `call_echo`

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:012345678901234567890123 4
Segmentation Fault
```

Overflowed buffer and corrupted return pointer

Buffer Overflow Stack Example #3

After call to gets

Stack Frame for `call_echo`

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:0123456789012345678901 23
01234567890123456789012 3
```

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

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Buffer Overflow Stack Example #3 Explained

After call to gets

Stack Frame for `call_echo`

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`

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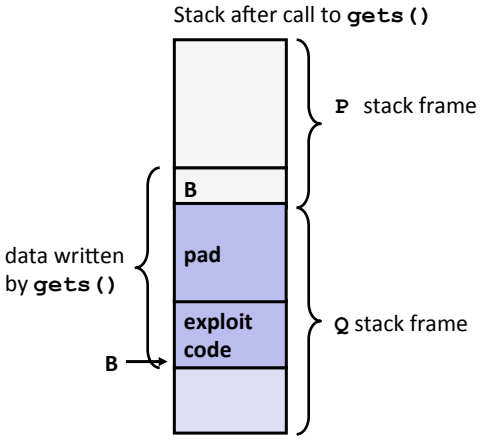
Code Injection Attacks

```
void P(){
  Q();
  ...
}
```

return address A

```
int Q() {
  char buf[64];
  gets(buf);
  ...
  return ...;
}
```



- 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

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Exploits Based on Buffer Overflows

- *Buffer overflow bugs can allow remote machines to execute arbitrary code on victim machines*

- **Distressingly common in real progams**
  - 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

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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**

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How to avoid buffer overflow attacks

- **Avoid overflow vulnerabilities**
- **Employ system-level protections**
- **Have compiler use "stack canaries"**

Lets talk about each…

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1. Avoid Overflow Vulnerabilities in Code (!)

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

ALWAYS use library routines that limit string lengths

- **`fgets`** instead of **`gets`**
- **`strncpy`** instead of **`strcpy`**
- Don't use **`scanf`** with **`%s`** conversion specification. Instead:
  - Use **`fgets`** to read the string
  - Or use **`%ns`** where **`n`** is a suitable integer

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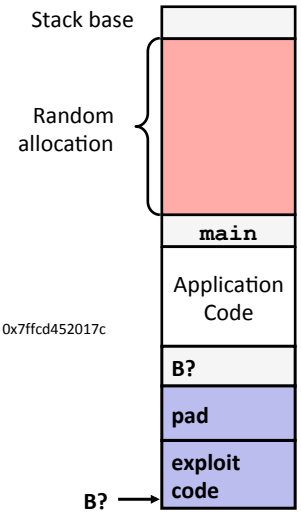
2. System-Level Protections

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
- 5 example executions of memory allocation code:

local 0x7ffe4d3be87c 0x7fff75a4f9fc 0x7ffeadb7c80c 0x7ffeaea2fdac 0x7ffcd452017c

  - Stack repositioned each time program executes



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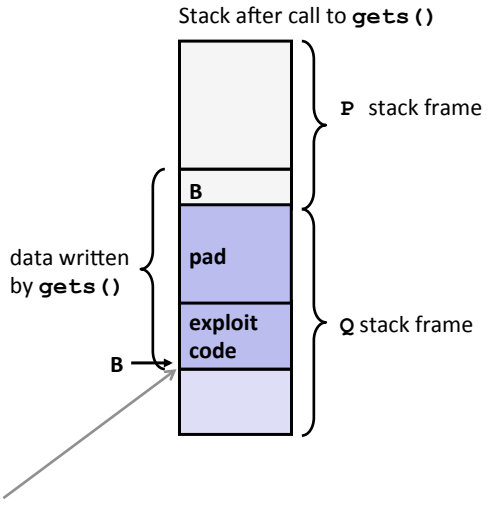
2. System-Level Protections can help

Nonexecutable code segments

- IA-32 and older code 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



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3. Stack Canaries can help

Idea:

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

gcc Implementation

- Uses option `-fstack-protector`
- This option is now the default (previously, was disabled)

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

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

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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
```

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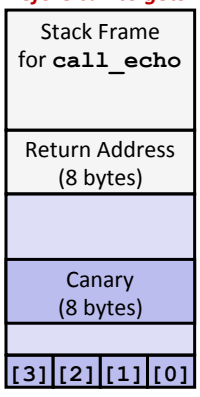
Setting Up Canary

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
    . . .
```

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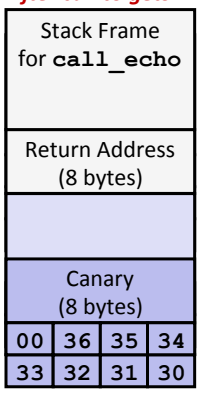
Checking Canary

After call to gets




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

Input: ***0123456***

```
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
.L6:        . . .
```


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

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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
```

rax ← rdi + rdx

Gadget address = 0x4004d4

- Use tail end of existing functions

Gadget Example #2

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

Encodes `movq %rax, %rdi`

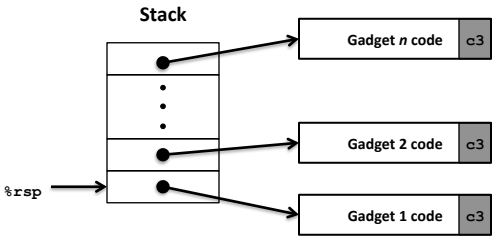
```
<setval>:
  4004d9:  c7 07 d4 48 89 c7   movl  $0xc78948d4,(%rdi)
  4004df:  c3                  retq
```

rdi ← rax

Gadget address = 0x4004dc

- Repurpose byte codes

ROP Execution



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

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