Machine-Level Programming V: Advanced

B&O Readings: 3.10

CSE 361: Introduction to Systems Software

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Note: these slides were originally created by Markus Püschel at Carnegie Mellon University

Today

- **Buffer Overflow**
  - Vulnerability
  - Protection

Recall: 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)  →   3.14
fun(3)  →   2
fun(4)  →   Segmentation fault
```

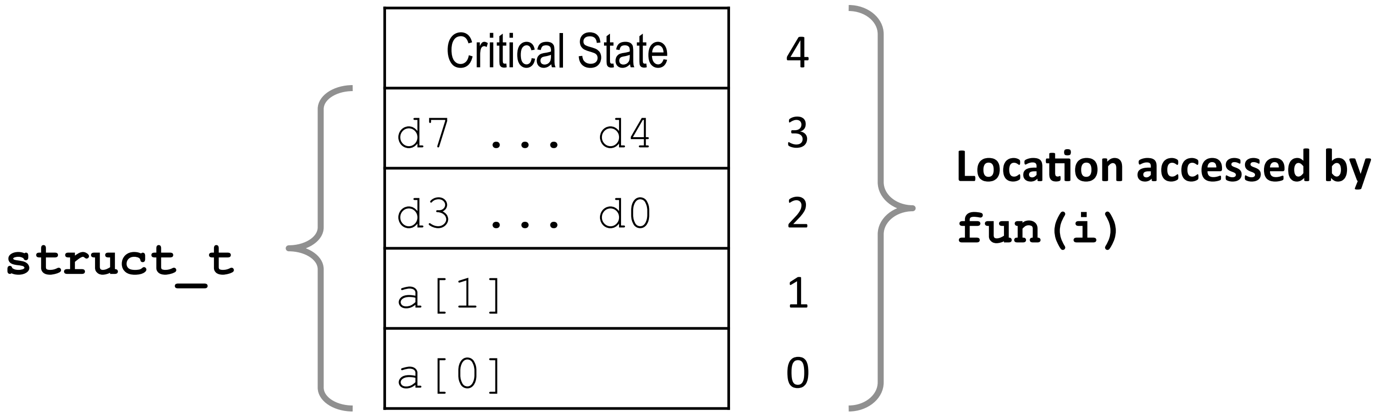
- Result is system specific

Memory Referencing Bug Explained

```
typedef struct {
  int a[2];
  double d;
} struct_t;
```

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

Explanation:



Such problems are a BIG deal

- **Generally called a “buffer overflow”**
  - when exceeding the memory size allocated for an array
  - possible because C doesn’t check array boundaries.
- **Why a big deal?**
  - It’s the #1 technical cause of security vulnerabilities
    - #1 overall cause is social engineering / user ignorance
- **Most common form**
  - Unchecked lengths on string inputs
  - Particularly for bounded character arrays on the stack
    - sometimes referred to as stack smashing

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;
}
```

- What can go wrong in this code?
  - 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

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
Type a string:012345678901234567890123
012345678901234567890123
```

```
unix>./bufdemo
Type a string:0123456789012345678901234
Segmentation Fault
```

Buffer Overflow Disassembly

echo:

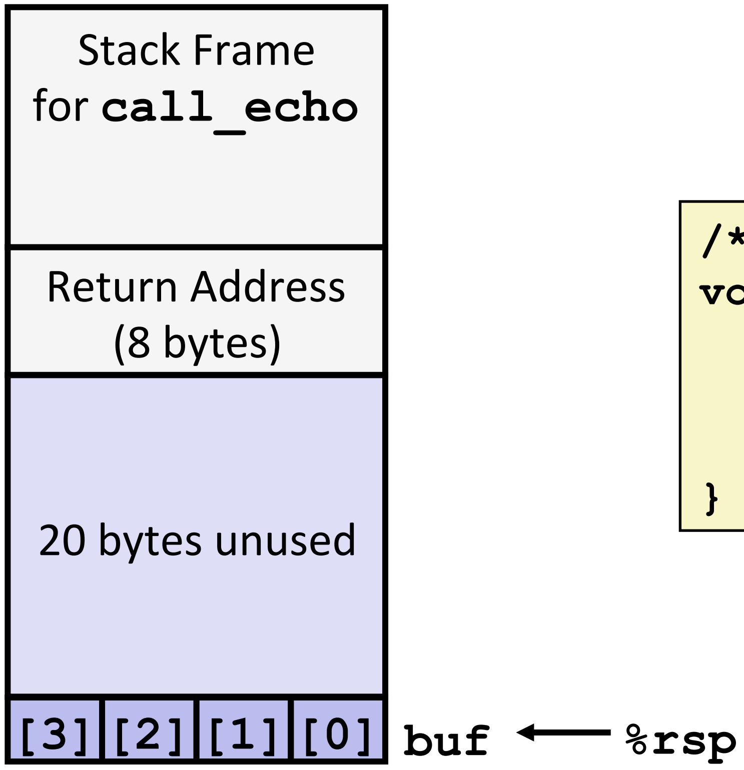
```
0000000004006cf <echo>:
 4006cf:  48 83 ec 18            sub    $0x18,%rsp
 4006d3:  48 89 e7               mov    %rsp,%rdi
 4006d6:  e8 a5 ff ff ff         callq  400680 <gets>
 4006db:  48 89 e7               mov    %rsp,%rdi
 4006de:  e8 3d fe ff ff         callq  400520 <puts@plt>
 4006e3:  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
```

Buffer Overflow Stack

Before call to gets

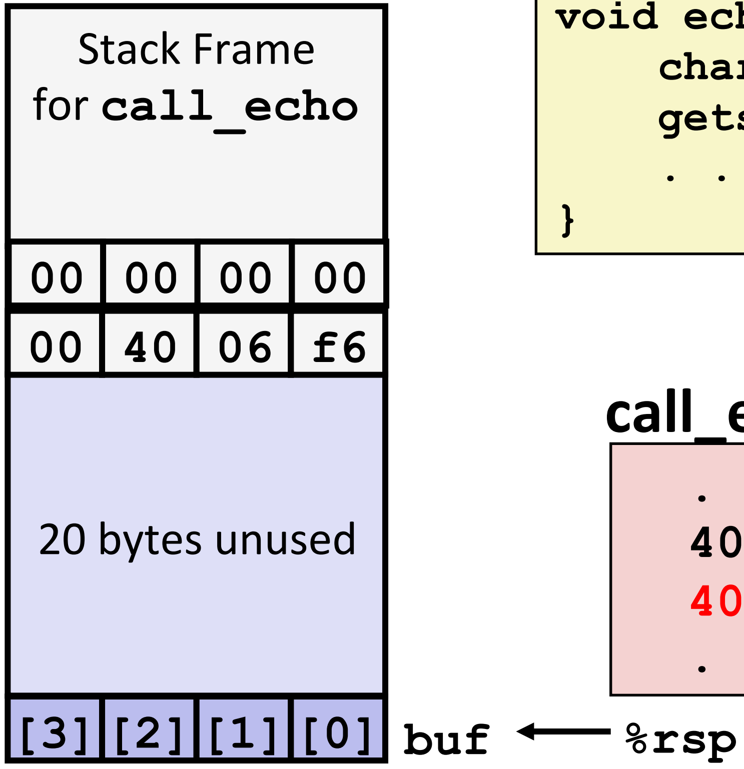


```
/* Echo Line */
void echo() {
    char buf[4];  /* Way too small! */
    gets(buf);
    puts(buf);
}
```

```
echo:
  subq  $24, %rsp
  movq  %rsp, %rdi
  call  gets
  . . .
```

Buffer Overflow Stack Example

Before call to gets



```
void echo() {
     char buf[4];
     gets(buf);
     . . .
}
```

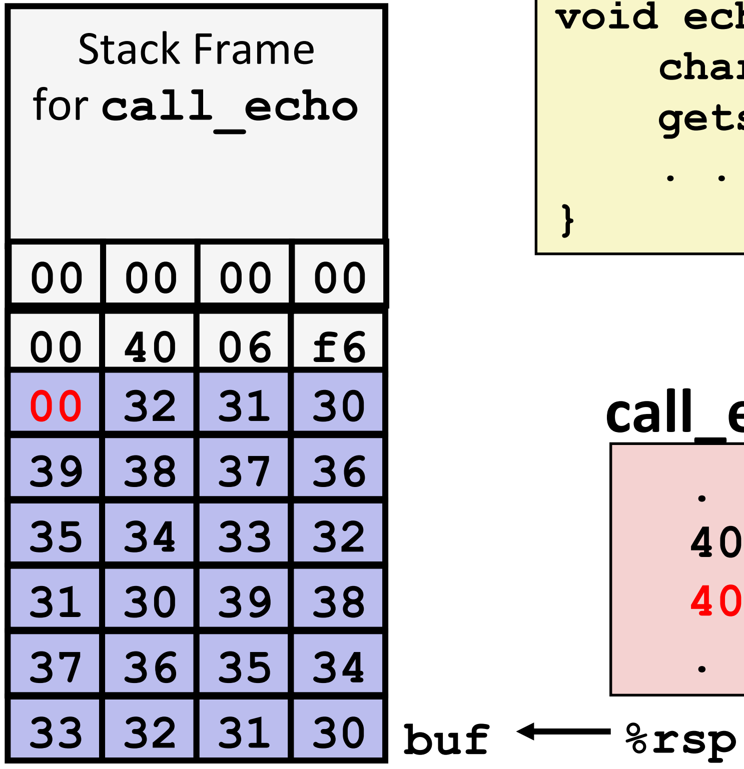
```
echo:
  subq   $24, %rsp
  movq   %rsp, %rdi
  call   gets
  . . .
```

call_echo:

```
   . . .
   4006f1:   callq   4006cf <echo>
   4006f6:   add     $0x8,%rsp
   . . .
```

Buffer Overflow Stack Example #1

After call to gets



```
void echo() {
     char buf[4];
     gets(buf);
     . . .
}
```

```
echo:
  subq   $24, %rsp
  movq   %rsp, %rdi
  call   gets
  . . .
```

call_echo:

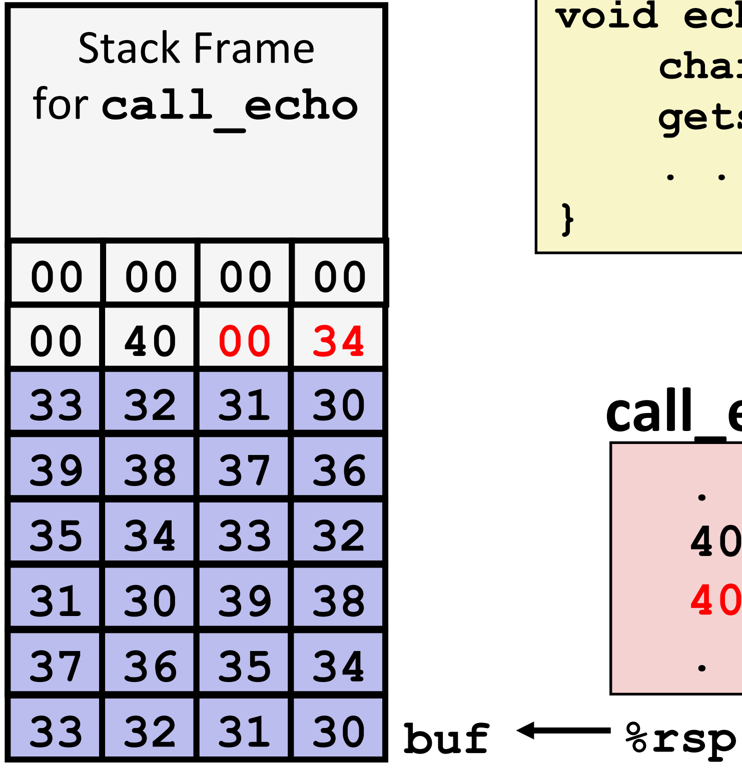
```
  . . .
  4006f1:   callq   4006cf <echo>
  4006f6:   add     $0x8,%rsp
  . . .
```

```
unix>./bufdemo
Type a string:01234567890123456789012
01234567890123456789012
```

Overflowed buffer, but did not corrupt state

Buffer Overflow Stack Example #2

After call to gets



```
void echo() {
    char buf[4];
    gets(buf);
    . . .
}
```

```
echo:
  subq  $24, %rsp
  movq  %rsp, %rdi
  call  gets
  . . .
```

call_echo:

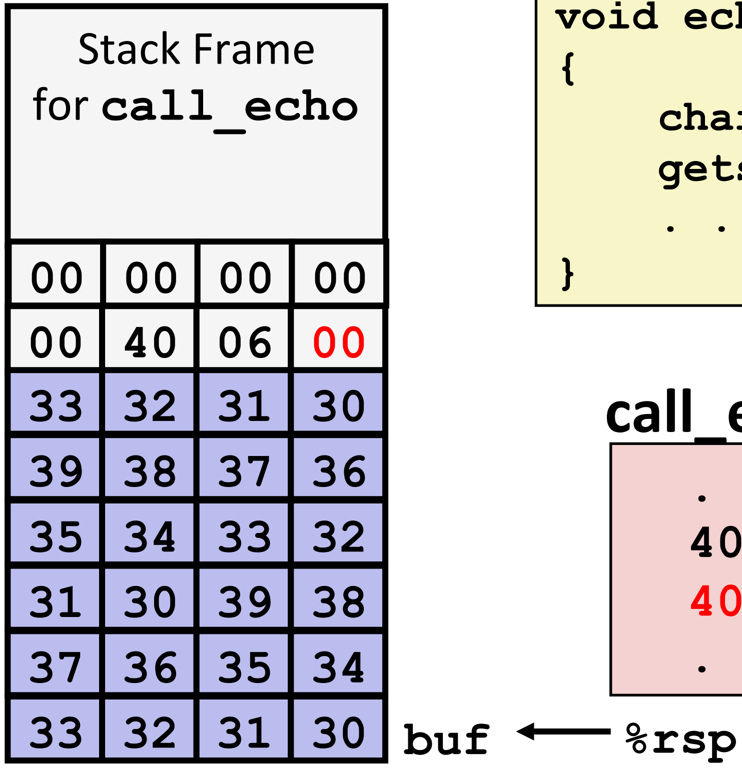
```
  . . .
  4006f1:  callq  4006cf <echo>
  4006f6:  add    $0x8,%rsp
  . . .
```

```
unix>./bufdemo
Type a string:0123456789012345678901234
Segmentation Fault
```

Overflowed buffer and corrupted return pointer

Buffer Overflow Stack Example #3

After call to gets



```
void echo()
{
     char buf[4];
     gets(buf);
     . . .
}
```

```
echo:
  subq  $24, %rsp
  movq  %rsp, %rdi
  call  gets
  . . .
```

call_echo:

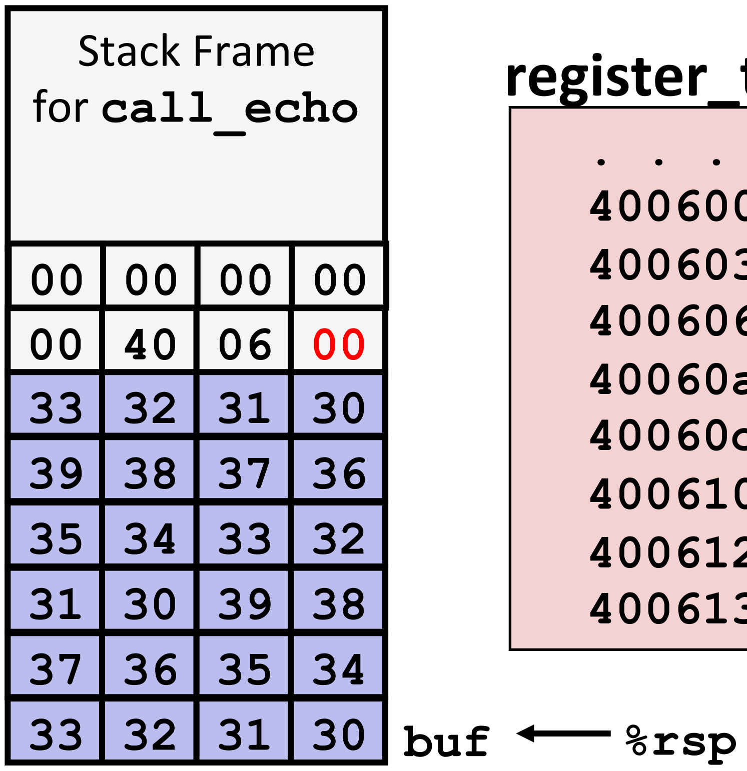
```
 . . .
 4006f1:  callq  4006cf <echo>
 4006f6:  add    $0x8,%rsp
 . . .
```

```
unix>./bufdemo
Type a string:01234567890123456789012
01234567890123456789012
```

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

Buffer Overflow Stack Example #3 Explained

After call to gets



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

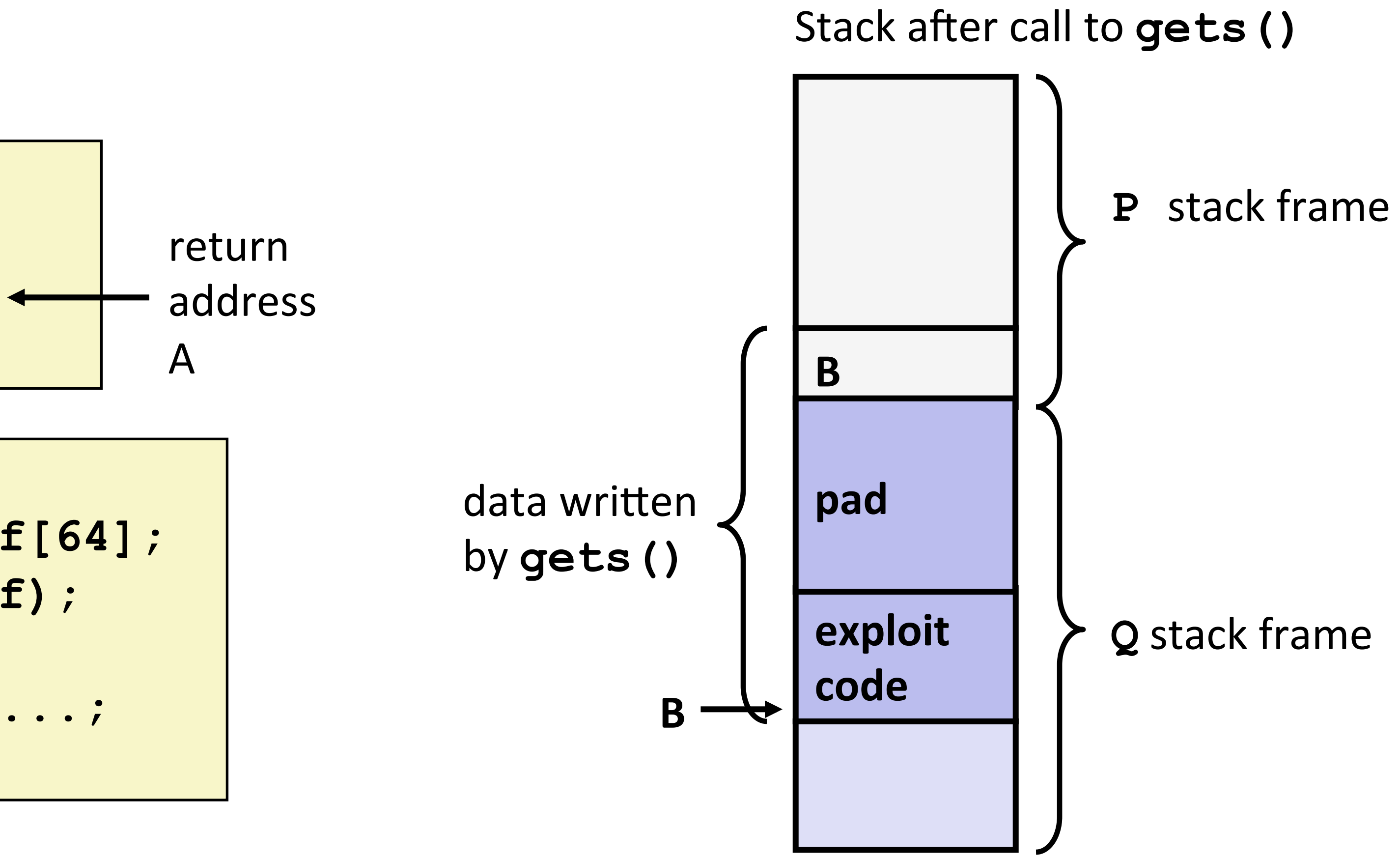
Lots of things happen, without modifying critical state

Eventually executes `retq` back to the function that invoked `main`

Code Injection Attacks

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

```
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

Exploits Based on Buffer Overflows

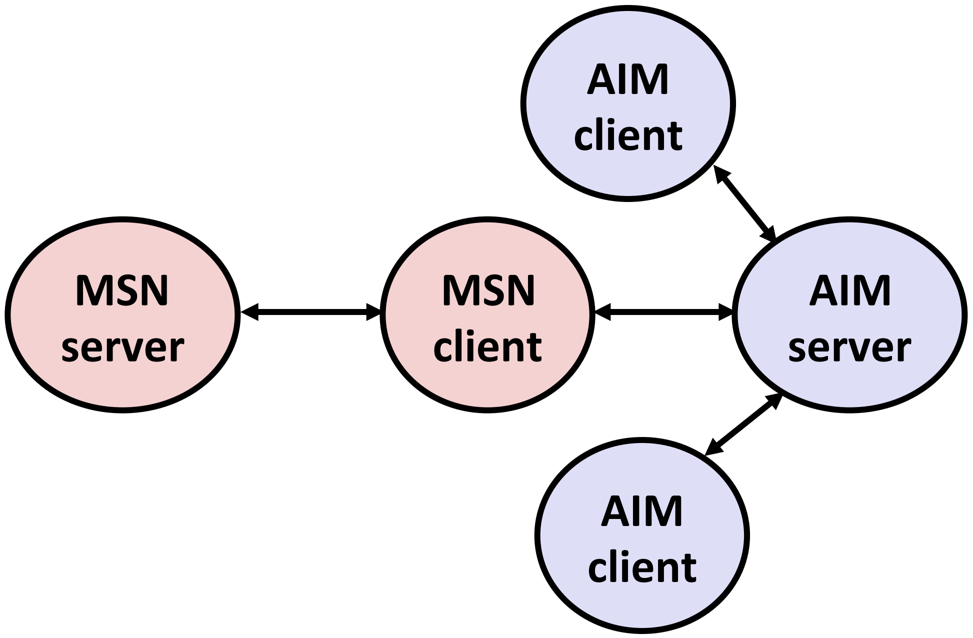
- ***Buffer overflow bugs can allow remote machines to execute arbitrary code on victim machines***
- **Distressingly common in real progams**
  - Programmers keep making the same mistakes ☹
  - Recent measures make these attacks much more difficult
- **Examples across the decades**
  - Original “Internet worm” (1988)
  - “IM wars” (1999)
  - Twilight hack on Wii (2000s)
  - … and many, many more
- **You will learn some of the tricks in buflab**
  - Hopefully to convince you to never leave such holes in your programs!!

Example: the original Internet worm (1988)

- **Exploited a few vulnerabilities to spread**
  - Early versions of the finger server (fingerd) used **`gets()`** to read the argument sent by the client:
    - **`finger droh@cs.cmu.edu`**
  - Worm attacked fingerd server by sending phony argument:
    - **`finger`** ***`"exploit-code padding new-return-address"`***
    - exploit code: executed a root shell on the victim machine with a direct TCP connection to the attacker.
- **Once on a machine, scanned for other machines to attack**
  - invaded ~6000 computers in hours (10% of the Internet ☺)
    - see June 1989 article in *Comm. of the ACM*
  - the young author of the worm was prosecuted…
  - prompted DARPA to form CERT housed in CMU

Example 2: IM War

- **July, 1999**
  - Microsoft launches MSN Messenger (instant messaging system).
  - Messenger clients can access popular AOL Instant Messaging Service (AIM) servers



IM War (cont.)

- **August 1999**
  - Mysteriously, Messenger clients can no longer access AIM servers
  - Microsoft and AOL begin the IM war:
    - AOL changes server to disallow Messenger clients
    - Microsoft makes changes to clients to defeat AOL changes
    - At least 13 such skirmishes
    - AOL had discovered a buffer overflow bug in their own AIM clients
    - They exploited it to detect and block Microsoft: the exploit code causes the client to look up some address (the bytes at some location in the AIM client) and return that as a signature to server
    - When Microsoft changed code to match signature, AOL changed signature location.
  - Recounting of the event by an engineer working on the MS Messenger at the time: https://nplusonemag.com/issue-19/essays/chat-wars/

```
Date: Wed, 11 Aug 1999 11:30:57 -0700 (PDT)
From: Phil Bucking <philbucking@yahoo.com>
Subject: AOL exploiting buffer overrun bug in their own software!
To: rms@pharlap.com

Mr. Smith,

I am writing you because I have discovered something that I think you
might find interesting because you are an Internet security expert with
experience in this area. I have also tried to contact AOL but received
no response.
```

`I am a developer who has been working on a revolutionary new instant messaging client that should be released later this year.`

```
...
It appears that the AIM client has a buffer overrun bug. By itself
this might not be the end of the world, as MS surely has had its share.
```

`But AOL is now *exploiting their own buffer overrun bug* to help in its efforts to block MS Instant Messenger.`

```
....
Since you have significant credibility with the press I hope that you
can use this information to help inform people that behind AOL's
friendly exterior they are nefariously compromising peoples' security.

Sincerely,
```

`Phil Bucking`
`Founder, Bucking Consulting`
`philbucking@yahoo.com`

It was later determined that this email originated from within Microsoft!

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**

OK, what to do about buffer overflow attacks

- Avoid overflow vulnerabilities
- Employ system-level protections
- Have compiler use “stack canaries”

1. Avoid Overflow Vulnerabilities in Code (!)

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

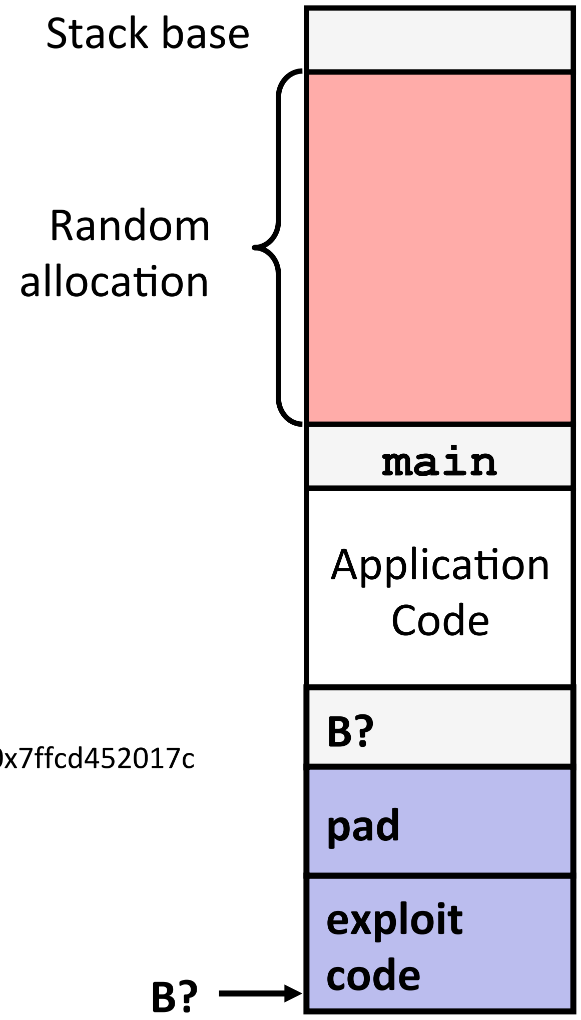
- **For example, use library routines that limit string lengths**
  - **`fgets`** instead of **`gets`**
  - **`strncpy`** instead of **`strcpy`**
  - Don't use **`scanf`** with `%s` conversion specification
    - Use **`fgets`** to read the string
    - Or use `%ns` where **`n`** is a suitable integer

2. System-Level Protections can help

- **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
  - E.g.: 5 executions of memory allocation code

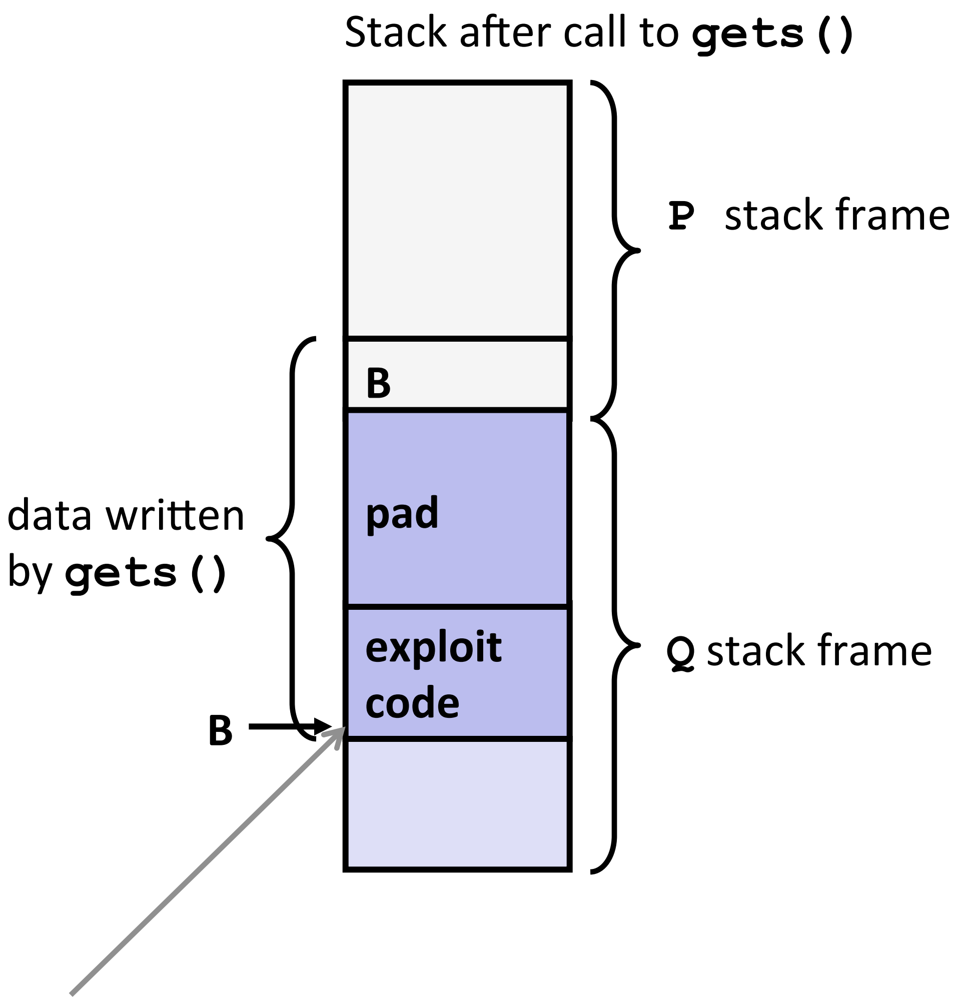
```
local          0x7ffe4d3be87c    0x7fff75a4f9fc   0x7ffeadb7c80c    0x7ffeaea2fdac   0x7ffcd452017c
```

  - Stack repositioned each time program executes



2. System-Level Protections can help

- **Nonexecutable code segments**
  - In traditional x86, 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



Any attempt to execute this code will fail

3. Stack Canaries can help

- **Idea**
  - Place special value ("canary") on stack just beyond buffer
  - Check for corruption before exiting function
- **GCC Implementation**
  - `-fstack-protector`
  - Now the default
    (disabled earlier using `-fno-stack-protector`)

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

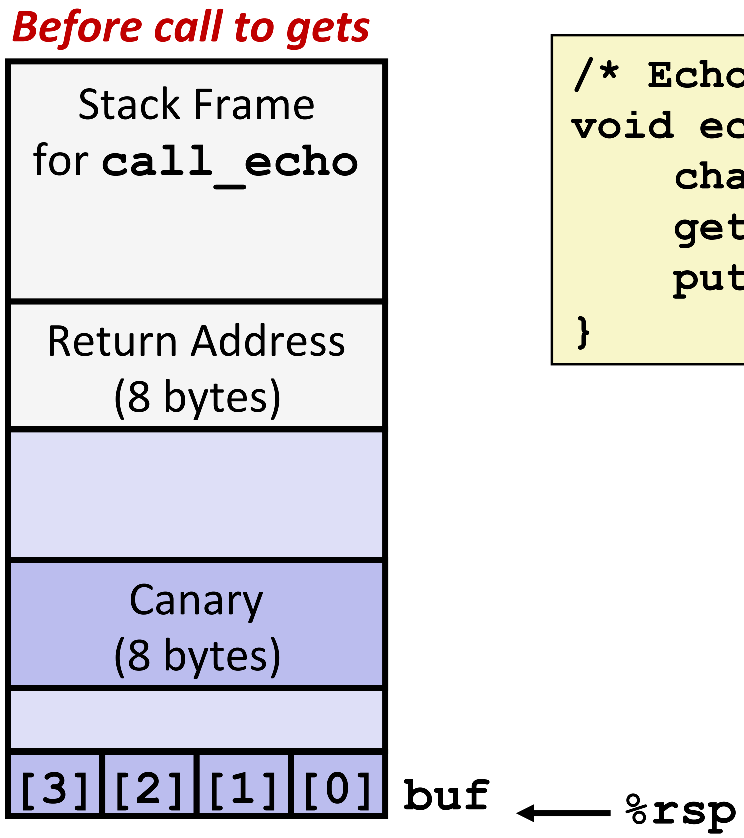
```
unix>./bufdemo-protected
Type a string:01234567
*** stack smashing detected ***
```

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
```

Setting Up Canary

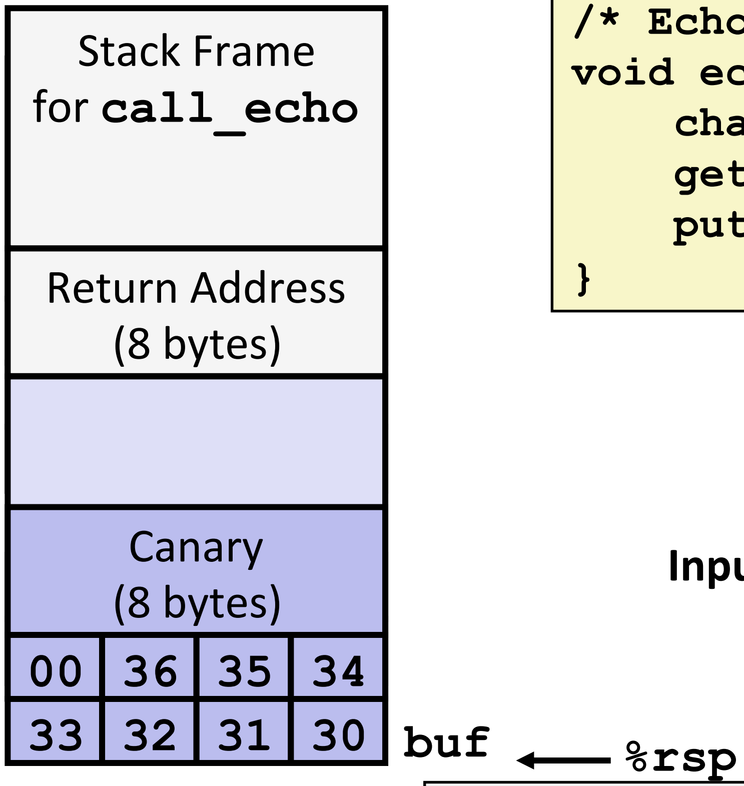


```
/* Echo Line */
void echo() {
    char buf[4];  /* Way too small! */
    gets(buf);
    puts(buf);
}
```

```
echo:
    . . .
    movq     %fs:40, %rax   # Get canary
    movq     %rax, 8(%rsp)  # Place on stack
    xorl     %eax, %eax     # Erase canary
    . . .
```

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

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
```

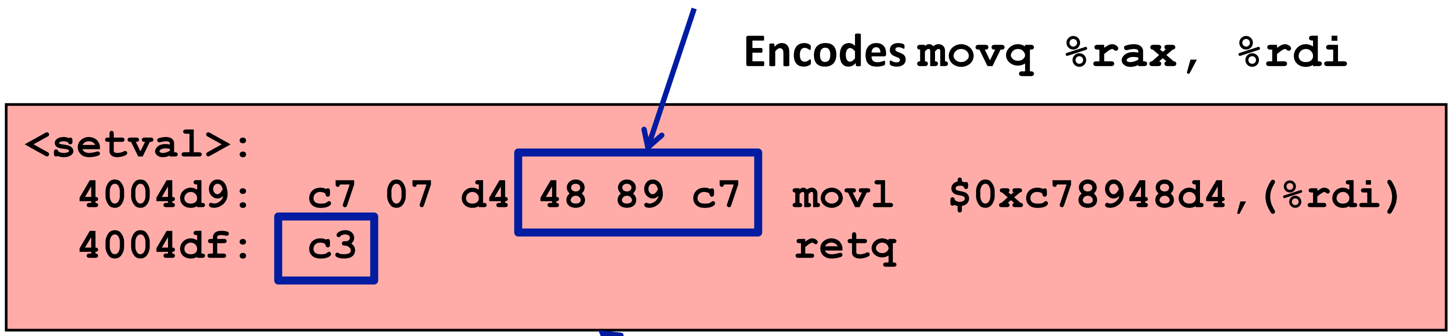
rax ← rdi + rdx

Gadget address = `0x4004d4`

- Use tail end of existing functions

Gadget Example #2

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



Encodes `movq %rax, %rdi`

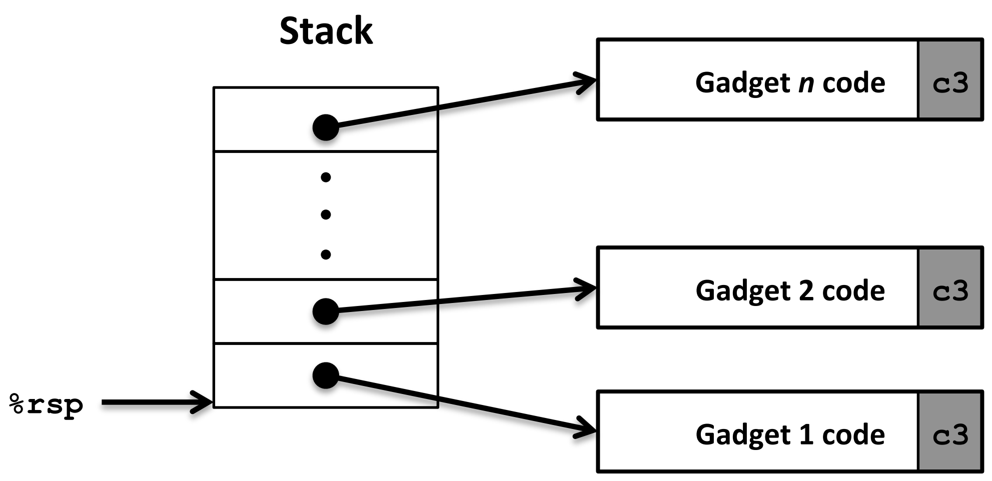
```
<setval>:
  4004d9:  c7 07 d4 48 89 c7  movl  $0xc78948d4,(%rdi)
  4004df:  c3                 retq
```

rdi ← rax

Gadget address = `0x4004dc`

- Repurpose byte codes

ROP Execution



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