Buffer overflows

- Address space layout
- Input buffers on the stack
- Overflowing buffers and injecting code
- Defenses against buffer overflows

IA32 Linux Memory Layout

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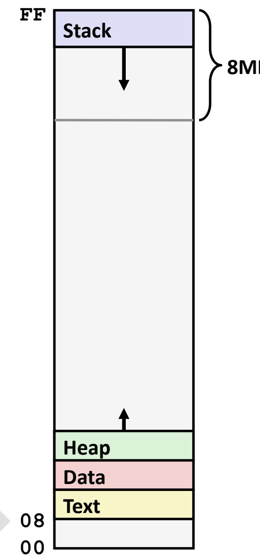
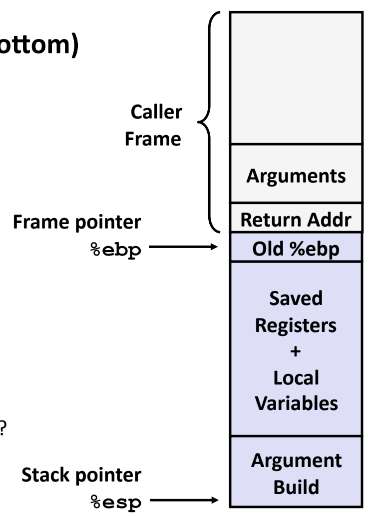
- **Stack**
  - Runtime stack (8MB limit)
- **Heap**
  - Dynamically allocated storage
  - Allocated by `malloc()`, `calloc()`, `new()`
- **Data**
  - Statically allocated data
    - Read-only: string literals
    - Read/write: global arrays and variables
- **Text**
  - Executable machine instructions
  - Read-only



Upper 2 hex digits
= 8 bits of address

IA32/Linux Stack Frame

- **Current Stack Frame ("Top" to Bottom)**
  - "Argument build" area (parameters for function about to be called)
  - Local variables (if can't be kept in registers)
  - Saved register context (when reusing registers)
  - Old frame pointer (for caller)
- **Caller's Stack Frame**
  - Return address
    - How does **call/ret** change the stack?
  - Arguments for this call



Memory Allocation Example

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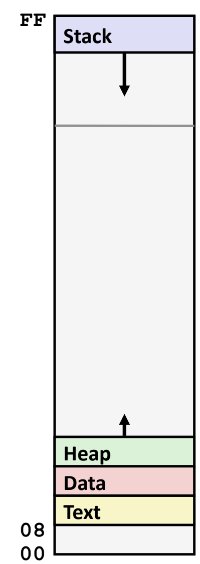
```
char big_array[1<<24];  /*  16 MB */
char huge_array[1<<28]; /* 256 MB */

int beyond;
char *p1, *p2, *p3, *p4;

int useless() {  return 0; }

int main()
{
 p1 = malloc(1 <<28);  /* 256 MB */
 p2 = malloc(1 << 8);  /* 256 B  */
 p3 = malloc(1 <<28);  /* 256 MB */
 p4 = malloc(1 << 8);  /* 256 B  */
 /* Some print statements ... */
}
```

Where does everything go?



IA32 Example Addresses

address range ~2^{32}

`$esp`	`0xffffbcd0`
`p3`	`0x65586008`
`p1`	`0x55585008`
`p4`	`0x1904a110`
`p2`	`0x1904a008`
`&p2`	`0x18049760`
`beyond`	`0x08049744`
`big_array`	`0x18049780`
`huge_array`	`0x08049760`
`main()`	`0x080483c6`
`useless()`	`0x08049744`
final `malloc()`	`0x006be166`

`malloc()` is dynamically linked;
its address is determined at runtime.

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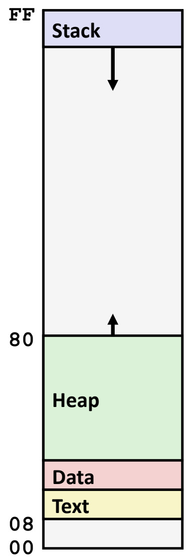

Internet Worm

- **These characteristics of the traditional IA32 Linux memory layout provide opportunities for malicious programs**
  - Stack grows "backwards" in memory
  - Data and instructions both stored in the same memory
- **November, 1988**
  - Internet Worm attacks thousands of Internet hosts.
  - How did it happen?

Internet Worm

- **These characteristics of the traditional IA32 Linux memory layout provide opportunities for malicious programs**
  - Stack grows "backwards" in memory
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  - Internet Worm attacks thousands of Internet hosts.
  - How did it happen?
- ***Stack buffer overflow* exploits!**

Buffer Overflow in a nutshell

- **Many classic Unix/Linux/C functions do not check argument sizes.**
- **C does not check array bounds.**
- **Allows overflowing (writing past the end of) buffers (arrays)**
- **Overflows of buffers on the stack overwrite interesting data.**
- **Attackers just choose the right inputs.**
- **Probably the most common type of security vulnerability**

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;
}
```

pointer to start of an array

same as:
***p = c;**
p++;

- What could go wrong in this code?

String Library Code

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/* Get string from stdin */
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    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 Unix functions**
  - `strcpy`: Copies string 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);
}
```

```
int main()
{
  printf("Type a string:");
  echo();
  return 0;
}
```

```
unix>./bufdemo
Type a string:1234567
1234567
```

```
unix>./bufdemo
Type a string:12345678
Segmentation Fault
```

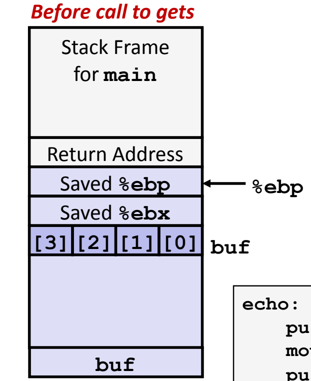
```
unix>./bufdemo
Type a string:123456789ABC
Segmentation Fault
```


Buffer Overflow Disassembly

```
080484f0 <echo>:
 80484f0:  55                push   %ebp
 80484f1:  89 e5             mov    %esp,%ebp
 80484f3:  53                push   %ebx
 80484f4:  8d 5d f8          lea    0xfffffff8(%ebp),%ebx
 80484f7:  83 ec 14          sub    $0x14,%esp
 80484fa:  89 1c 24          mov    %ebx,(%esp)
 80484fd:  e8 ae ff ff ff    call   80484b0 <gets>
 8048502:  89 1c 24          mov    %ebx,(%esp)
 8048505:  e8 8a fe ff ff    call   8048394 <puts@plt>
 804850a:  83 c4 14          add    $0x14,%esp
 804850d:  5b                pop    %ebx
 804850e:  c9                leave
 804850f:  c3                ret
```

```
 80485f2:  e8 f9 fe ff ff    call   80484f0 <echo>
 80485f7:  8b 5d fc          mov    0xfffffffc(%ebp),%ebx
 80485fa:  c9                leave
 80485fb:  31 c0             xor    %eax,%eax
 80485fd:  c3                ret
```

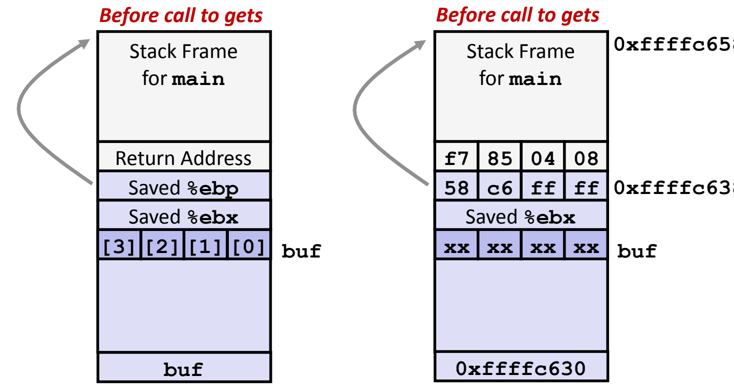
Buffer Overflow Stack




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

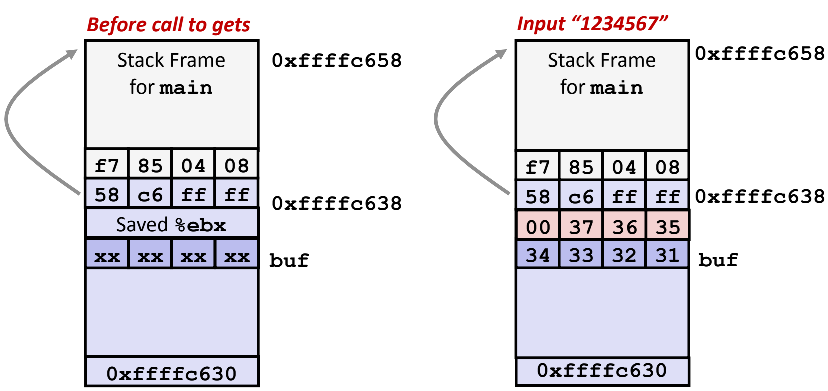
```
echo:
    pushl %ebp              # Save %ebp on stack
    movl  %esp, %ebp
    pushl %ebx              # Save %ebx
    leal  -8(%ebp),%ebx     # Compute buf as %ebp-8
    subl  $20, %esp         # Allocate stack space
    movl  %ebx, (%esp)      # Push buf addr on stack
    call  gets              # Call gets
    . . .
```


Buffer Overflow Stack Example



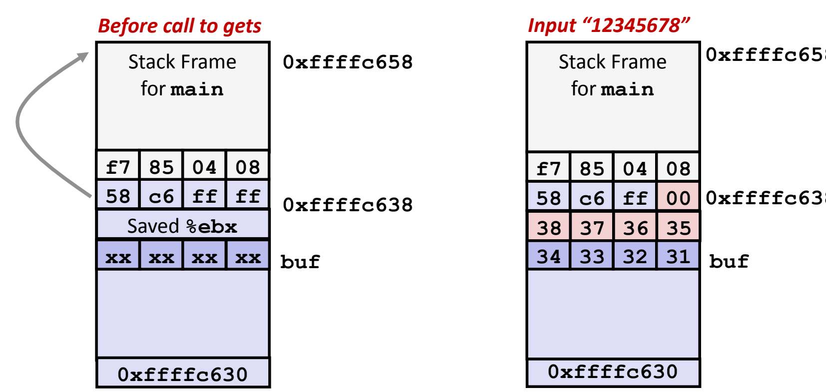

```
80485f2:call  80484f0 <echo>
80485f7:mov   0xffffffffc(%ebp),%ebx # Return Point
```


Buffer Overflow Example #1



Overflow buf, and corrupt saved %ebx, but no problem, why?
What happens if input has one more byte?

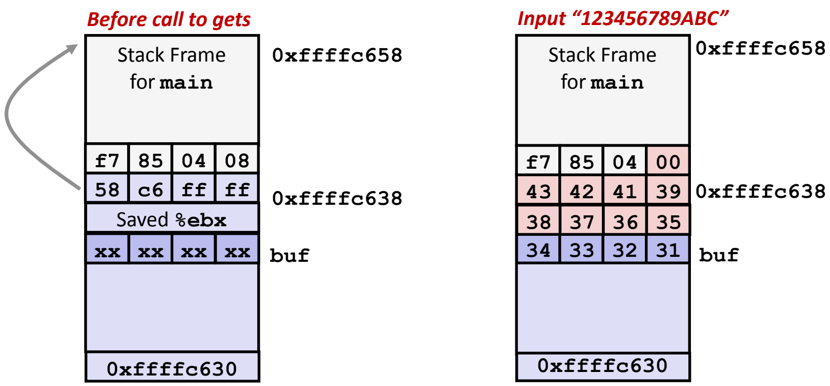
Buffer Overflow Example #2



Frame pointer corrupted

```
. . .
804850a:  83 c4 14   add    $0x14,%esp   # deallocate space
804850d:  5b         pop    %ebx         # restore %ebx
804850e:  c9         leave               # movl %ebp, %esp; popl %ebp
804850f:  c3         ret                 # Return
```

Buffer Overflow Example #3



Return address corrupted

```
080485f2: call  80484f0 <echo>
080485f7: mov   0xfffffffc(%ebp),%ebx  # Return Point
```

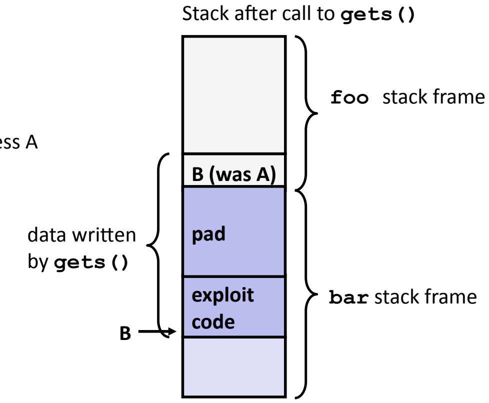
Hmmm, what can you do with it?

Malicious Use of Buffer Overflow

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

return address A

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



- **Input string contains byte representation of executable code**
- **Overwrite return address A with address of buffer (need to know B)**
- **When `bar()` executes `ret`, will jump to exploit code (instead of A)**

Exploits Based on Buffer Overflows

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

commandline facebook of the 80s!

Avoiding Overflow Vulnerability

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

- **Use library routines that limit string lengths**
  - **`fgets`** instead of **`gets`** (second argument to fgets sets limit)
  - **`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
- ***Other ideas?***

System-Level Protections

- **Randomized stack offsets**
  - At start of program, allocate random amount of space on stack
  - Makes it difficult for exploit to predict beginning of inserted code
- **Use techniques to *detect* stack corruption**
- **Nonexecutable code segments**
  - Only allow code to execute from "text" sections of memory
  - Do NOT execute code in stack, data, or heap regions
  - Hardware support needed

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