Protection is essential to security

Protection
- The mechanism that provides and enforces controlled access of resources to processes (=users=subjects)
- A protection mechanism enforces security policies

- User accounts & user authentication
- User privileges: access rights
  - File protection
- Resource scheduling
  - Priorities
- Quotas (sometimes)

Co-located resources

- Early computers
  - Single-user batch processing
  - No need for access control – access control was physical
- Later ... timesharing systems
  - Multiple users share the same computer
  - User accounts & access control important
- Even later ... PCs
  - Back to single-user systems
  - … but software is less trusted
- Now: PCs + mobile devices + IoT devices + …
  - Shared access: cloud computing, file servers, university systems
  - Need to enforce access control

Access control

- Ensure that authorized users can do what they are permitted to do ... and no more
- Real world
  - Keys, badges, guards, policies
- Computer world
  - Hardware
  - Operating systems
  - Web servers, databases & other multi-access software
  - Policies

OS controls access to resources

- CPU
- Memory
- Files & devices
- Network

Fundamental Mechanisms

- Protect the operating system from applications
- Protect applications from each other
- Allow the OS to stay in control

The OS and hardware are the fundamental parts of the Trusted Computing Base (TCB)
Hardware timer

- OS kernel requests timer interrupts
  - One of several timer devices:
    - Programmable Interval Timer (PIT)
    - HPET (High Precision Event Timer)
    - APIC timer (one per CPU)
  - Most current Intel Linux systems use APIC
- Applications cannot disable this
  Ensures that the OS can always regain control

Processes

Timer interrupts ensure OS can examine processes while they are running

OS Process Scheduler

- Decides whether a process had enough CPU time and it is time for another process to run
- Avoid starvation: ensure all processes will get a chance to run
  - This would be an availability attack
- Prioritize threads
  - Based on user, user-defined priorities, interactivity, deadlines, “fairness”
  - One process should not adversely affect others

Memory Management Unit

All modern CPUs have a Memory Management Unit (MMU)

- OS provides each process with virtual memory
  - Gives each process the illusion that it has the entire address space
  - One process cannot see another process' address space
  - Enforce access rights
    - Read-only
    - Read-write
  - Execute

Page translation

Virtual memory address

Page number, p

Displacement (offset), d

\[ f = \text{page\_table}[p] \]

CPU

Logical address

Physical address

Page table

Physical memory

User & kernel mode

Kernel mode = privileged, system, or supervisor mode

- Access restricted regions of memory
- Modify the memory management unit (page tables)
- Set timers
- Define interrupt vectors
- Halt the processor
- Etc.

- Getting into kernel mode
  - Trap: explicit instruction
    - Intel architecture: INT instruction (interrupt)
    - ARM architecture: SWI instruction (software interrupt)
  - Violation
    - Hardware interrupt (e.g., receipt of network data or timer)
Protection Rings
- All modern operating systems support two modes of operation: user & kernel
  - Multics defined a ring structure with 6 different privilege levels
    - Each ring is protected from higher numbered rings
    - Special call (call gates) to cross rings: jump to predefined locations
    - Most of OS did not run in ring 0
  - Intel x86 and IA-64 support 4 rings
  - Today’s OSes only use:
    - Ring 0: kernel
    - Ring 3: user
  - Note: hypervisors (virtual machine monitors) run at a 3rd privilege level
    - In many systems, this is ring -1 for the hypervisor, 0 for the kernel and 3 for user programs

Subjects and Objects
- Subject: the thing that needs to access resources
  - Typically the user
- Object: the resource the subject may access
  - Typically the file
- Access control
  - Define what different subjects are allowed to do or define what can be done to different objects

Traditional operating systems:
Define what can be done to different objects (permissions are associated with each object)

User authentication
- Establish user identity – determine the subject
- Operating system privileges are granted by user identity

Steps
1. Get user credentials (e.g., name, password)
2. Authenticate user by validating the credentials
3. Grant further access based on user ID

Domains of Protection
- Subjects (users, processes) interact with objects
  - Objects include:
    - Hardware (CPU, memory, I/O devices)
    - Software: files, processes, semaphores, messages, signals
  - A process should be allowed to access only objects that it is authorized to access
    - A process operates in a protection domain
    - Protection domain defines the objects the process may access and how it may access them

Domains of protection
- Subjects (users, processes) interact with objects
  - Objects include:
    - Hardware (CPU, memory, I/O devices)
    - Software: files, processes, semaphores, messages, signals

An Access Control Matrix is the primary abstraction for protection in computer security

Objects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>F4</th>
<th>F3</th>
<th>Printer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>write</td>
<td>print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>write</td>
<td>print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>write</td>
<td>print</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An Access Control Matrix is the primary abstraction for protection in computer security
Access Transitions

Change the state of the system
Expressed in commands
1. Command
2. Possible condition
3. One or more primitive operations

Condition = ownership, ability to copy object, ...

Primitive operations =
− Create subject = add a row a[s] onto a
− Create object = add a column a[o] onto a
− Enter right r into a[s, o]
− Delete right r from a[s, o]
− Destroy subject s = delete row a[s]
− Destroy object o = delete column a[o]

Access Control Matrix: Domain Transfers

Switching from one domain to another is a configurable policy

Example: Process p creates file f with owner read (r)/write (w) permissions
− command createfile(owner uid(1), f)

− create object f
− enter "owner" into a(uid(1), f)
− enter "r" into a(uid(1), f)
− enter "w" into a(uid(1), f)

Access Matrix: Additional operations

Copy: allow delegation of rights
− Copy a specific access right on an object from one domain to another
  • Rights may specify either a copy or a transfer of rights

Control: change entries in a row
− If access(i, j) includes a control right, then a process executing in Domain i can change access rights for Domain j

Owner: allow new rights to be added or removed
− An object may be identified as being owned by the domain
− Owner can add and remove any right in any column of the object
Implementing an access matrix

• A single table is usually impractical
  – Big size: # domains (users) \times # objects (files)
  – Objects may come and go frequently

• Access Control List
  – Associate a column of the table with each object

Not good enough!

• An access control matrix does not address everything we may want
• Processes execute with the rights of the user (domain)
• But sometimes they need extra privileges
  – Read configuration files
  – Read/write from/to device
  – Append to a queue
• We don’t want the user do be able to access these objects
  – So we need a 3-D access control matrix: (subjects, objects, processes)
• This gets messy!
  – We can assign an object that is an executable file a temporary domain transfer
  – When run, it assumes the privileges of another domain

Example: Limited ACLs in POSIX systems

Problem: an ACL takes up a varying amount of space
  – Won’t fit in an inode

UNIX Compromise:
  – A file defines access rights for three domains:
    • the owner, the group, and everyone else
  – Permissions
    • Read, write, execute, directory search
    • Set user ID on execution
    • Set group ID on execution
  – Default permissions set by the umask system call
  – chown system call changes the object’s owner
  – chgrp system call changes the object’s owner
  – chmod system call changes the object’s permissions

Example: Full ACLs in POSIX systems

• What if we really want a full ACL?
  • Extended attributes: stored outside of the inode
    – Hold an ACL
    – And other name=value attributes

  • Enumerated list of permissions on users and groups
    – Operations on all objects:
      • delete, readattr, writeattr, readextattr, writeextattr, readsecurity, writesecurity, chown
    – Operations on directories
      • list, add_file, add_subdirectory, delete_child
    – Operations on files
      • read, write, append, execute
    – Inheritance controls

Implementing an access control matrix

Capability List

  – Associate a row of the table with each domain

Example: Full ACLs in POSIX systems
Capability Lists

- List of objects together with the operations allowed on the objects
- Each item in the list is a capability: the operations allowed on a specific object
  - Also called a ticket
- A process presents the capability along with a request
  - Possessing the capability means that access is allowed
- A process cannot modify its capability list

Advantages
- Run-time checking is more efficient
- Delegating rights is easy

Disadvantages
- Changing a file's permissions is hard
- Hard to find all users that have access to a resource
- Limited implementation
- Cambridge CAP, IBM AS/400
- Not used in mainstream systems
- BUT
- Used for single sign-on services and other authorization services such as OAuth and Kerberos (sort of)

Windows Capabilities

- Added in Windows 2000
- Can override or complement ACLs
- Profiles permit whitelisting or blacklisting users
- Security policy defined by groups (Group Policy) for the entire system
  - Associated with sites, domains, or organizations

POSIX file permissions

UNIX permission model
- Read, write, execute access
  - Each file has an owner
  - All independent
- File access permissions are expressed as:

```
ls -l /bin/ls
-rwxr-xr-x 1 root wheel 38624 Dec 10 04:04 /bin/ls
```
Permission checking

if you are the owner of the file
  only owner permissions apply
if you are part of a group the file belongs to
  only group permissions apply
else “other” permissions apply
I cannot read this file even if I’m in the localaccounts group:

$ ls -l testfile
----rwx--- 1 paul localaccounts 6 Jan 30 10:37 testfile

Execute permission

• Distinct from read
  • You may have execute-only access
    – This takes away your right to copy the file
    … or inspect it
    – But the OS can load it & run it

Windows

• Windows has more permissions
  – Read, write, execute
  – Also: delete, change permission, change ownership

• Users & resources can be partitioned into domains
  – Each domain can have its own administrator
  – HR can manage users
  – Individual departments can manage printers

• Trust can be inherited in one or both directions
  – Department resources domains may trust the user domain
  – User domain may not trust department resources domains

What about directories?

• Directories are just files
  That map names to inode numbers

• Permissions have special meaning
  – Write = permission to create a file in the directory
  – Read = permission to list the contents of a directory
  – Execute = permission to search through the directory

• If you have write access to the directory of a file, you can delete the file
  – Even if you don’t have write access to the file itself
• If you don’t have write access to the directory
  – You cannot create or delete a file … even if you have write access to it

Where are user IDs and group IDs stored?

On Linux, user ID information in the password file, /etc/passwd
  (which does not contain passwords anymore)

root:x:0:0:System Administrator:/root:/bin/sh

  – User name
  – (password)
  – User ID
  – Default group ID
  – User’s full name
  – Home directory
  – Login shell

• Group IDs are stored /etc/group
  – wheel:x:0
  – certusers:x:29:root,jabber,postfix,cyrus,calendar,dovecot

Changing permissions

The chmod command

• Set permissions
  $ chmod u=rwx,g=rx,o=- testfile
  $ ls -l testfile
  -rwxr-x--- 1 paul localaccounts 6 Jan 30 10:37 testfile

• Add permissions
  $ chmod go+w testfile
  $ ls -l testfile
  -rwxr-x-w- 1 paul localaccounts 6 Jan 30 10:37 testfile

• Remove permissions
  $ chmod o-w testfile
  $ ls -l testfile
  -rwxr-x--- 1 paul localaccounts 6 Jan 30 10:37 testfile

user = read, write, execute
group = read, execute
other = -none

Changing permissions

Or the old-fashioned way – specify an octal bitmask

- Set permissions
  - `chmod 754 testfile`
  - `ls -l testfile`

```
-rwxr-xr-- 1 paul localaccounts 6 Jan 30 10:37 testfile
```

```
7 5 4
111 101 100
rwx r-x r--
user group other
```

File permissions are stored in the file’s inode

- Owner id, group id, permissions, access/creation/modification times

ACLs and ACEs

Access Control List (ACL) = list of Access Control Entries (ACE)

- ACE identifies a user or group & permissions
  - Files: read, write, execute, append
  - Directories: list, search, read attributes, add file, add sub-directory, delete contents
- “Inheritance” permission
  - directory’s file contents can inherit one set of ACLs
  - Directories inherit another set of ACLs

- Wildcards are often supported
- See `chmod` on macOS or `setfacl` on Linux

Sometimes groups aren’t enough

Access Control Lists (ACL)

- Explicit list of permissions for users
- Supported by most operating systems
  - Windows ≥ XP
  - macOS ≥ 10.4
  - Linux ≥ ext3 file system + acl package

Example ACL

```
pxk.*  rwx
419-ta.*  rwx
*.faculty  rx
*.  x
```

- Users pxk and 419-ta have read-write-execute access
- Users in the faculty group have read-execute access
- Others only have execute access

Search order

ACEs are evaluated in the order they are entered into the ACL

In this case, I don’t have write access to the file:

```
419-ta.*  rwx
*.faculty  rx  ← This is me ← This appears first & has priority
pxk.*  rwx  ← So is this
*.  x  ← So is this
```
Search order: ACLs + permissions

In systems like Linux that integrate ACLs with 9-bit permissions:
1. If you are the owner of the file, only owner permissions apply
2. If you are part of a group the file belongs to, only group permissions apply
3. Else search through the ACL entries to find an applicable entry
4. Else other permissions apply

Initial file permissions

On Unix-derived systems (Linux, macOS, Android, *BSD):
- umask = set of permissions applications cannot set on files
  - Bitmask (octal) of bits that will be turned off
- To disallow read-write-execute for everyone but the owner
  - umask = 000 111 111 = 077
- Default umask on macOS & Ubuntu is 022
  - 022 = 000 010 010 = --- w- w-
  - This takes away write access from group & other
  - By default new files are readable by all and writable only by the owner

See the umask command and umask system call man pages

Watch out for race conditions!

- Suppose we create a file readable by all: rwxr--r--
- But then we change the permissions to rwx------

GOOD
Create a file: rwxr--r--
Change permissions to rwx------
[Attacker opens the file for reading]
Do your work

BAD
Create a file: rwxr--r--
[Attacker opens the file for reading]
Change permissions to rwx------
Do your work

- We don’t know when the attacker will hit
- Once the attacker has the file open, changing permissions does not take access away
  - Access rights are only checked when the file is opened!

Giving files away

- You can change the owner of a file
  - chown alice testfile
  - Changes the file’s owner to alice
- You can change the group of a file too
  - chgrp accounting testfile
  - Changes the file’s group to accounting

... but you have to be the owner to do either

Changing user & group IDs

- root = uid 0 = super user
  - Access to everything
- How do you log in?
  - login program runs as uid=0
  - Gets your credentials
  - Authenticates you
  - Then:
    ```shell
    chdir(home_directory);
    setgid(group_id);
    setuid(user_id);
    execve(user_shell, ...,);
    ```

Changing user ID temporarily

- What if some files need special access?
  - A print program needs to access the printer queue
  - A database needs to access its underlying files
  - An executable file normally runs under the user’s ID
- A special permission bit, the “setuid bit” changes this
  - Executable files with the setuid bit will run with the effective UID set to the owner of the file
  - Directories with the setuid bit set will force all files and sub-directories created in them to be owned by the directory owner
- Same thing with groups – the setgid permission bit
  - Executable files with this bit set will run with effective gid set to the gid of the file.
Principle of Least Privilege

At each abstraction layer, every element (user, process, function) should be able to access only the resources necessary to perform its task.

- Even if an element is compromised, the scope of damage is limited.
- Consider:
  - Good: You cannot kill another user’s process.
  - Good: You cannot open the /etc/hosts file for writing.
  - Good: Private member functions & local variables in functions limit scope.
- Violation: a compromised print daemon allows someone to add users.
- Violation: a process can write a file even though there is no need to.
- Violation: admin privileges set by default for any user account.

Least privilege is often difficult to define & enforce.

Privilege Separation

Divide a program into multiple parts: high & low privilege components.

Example on POSIX systems:
- Each process has a real and effective user ID.
- Privileges are evaluated based on the effective user ID.
  - Normally, real == effective.
- An executable file may be tagged with a setuid bit.
  - chmod +sx filename
  - When run: uid = user’s ID; euid = file owner’s ID (without setuid, runs with user’s ID).
- Separating a program:
  1. Run a setuid program.
  2. Create a communication link to self (pipe, socket, shared memory).
  3. fork.
  4. One of the processes will call seteuid (getuid ()) to lower its privilege.

User interaction:

Low privilege part  High privilege part

Setuid can get you into trouble!

- Most setuid programs ran as root.
- If they were compromised, the whole system was compromised.
- This was one of the best attack vectors for Unix/Solaris/Linux systems.

Other Access Control Models

Access Control Models: MAC vs. DAC

DAC: Discretionary Access Control
- A subject (domain) can pass information onto any other subject.
- In some cases, access rights may be transferred e.g., chmod.
- Users are in charge of access permissions.
- Most systems use this.

MAC: Mandatory Access Control
- Policy is centrally controlled.
- Users cannot override the policy.
- Administrators are in charge of access permissions.

What’s wrong with ACLs?

- Users are in control
  - chmod o+r+x secret.docx.
  - Now everyone can read and modify secret.docx.
- Doesn’t work well in environments where management needs to define access permissions.
- No ability to give time-based or location-based permissions.
- Access associated with objects
  - Hard to turn off access for a subject - except by locking the user.
  - Otherwise have to go through each object and remove user from the ACL.
**MLS: Multi-Level Security Systems**

Handle multiple levels of classified data in one system

**Bell-LaPadula Model**
- Designed for the military
- Based on U.S. military classification levels

Motivation:
Preserve confidentiality. If one program gets hacked, it will not be able to access data at higher levels of classification.

- If you have confidential clearance:
  - You can access confidential & unclassified data
  - You can create confidential, secret, and top-secret data

---

**Bell-LaPadula Base OS Model**

Designed to address security concerns in the Air Force

- Reference Monitor
  - Component of the OS that would manage access control decisions
- Trusted Computing Base (TCB)
  - Set of components whose correct functioning is sufficient to ensure the security policy is being enforced
  - If the TCB fails, the security policy could be breached

---

**Bell-LaPadula Access Model**

- Objects are classified into a hierarchy of sensitivity levels
  - Unclassified, Confidential, Secret, Top Secret
- Each user is assigned a clearance
- "No read up; no write down"
  - Cannot read from a higher clearance level
  - Cannot write to a lower clearance level
- Assumes vulnerabilities exist and staff may be careless
- Need a "trusted subject" to declassify files

---

**Bell-LaPadula Model Properties**

Every subject & object gets a security label (e.g., confidential, secret)

1. **The Simple Security Property**  
   - mandatory rules for reading
   - No Read Up (NRU)
   - A subject cannot read from a higher security level

2. **-Property (star-property)**  
   - mandatory rules for writing
   - No Write Down (NWD)
   - A subject cannot write to a lower security level

3. **The Discretionary Security Property**  
   - Access control matrix can be used for DAC after MAC is enforced

---

**BLP Tranquility Principle**

- **Tranquility principle**: security labels never change during operation
- **Weak tranquility principle**: labels may change but in a way that does not violate security policy
  - Implements the principle of least privilege
  - If owner has Top Secret clearance, a program will run at the lowest clearance level and get upgraded only when it needs to access data at a higher level
- BLP gets complicated
  - Changes in security policy in real time can result in access being revoked
  - Even in the middle of an operation
- Difficult to use BLP in practice
  - Networking, servers, collaborative work

---

**No Write Down?**

- If you can write up, can a Confidential user overwrite Secret data?
  - That's an attack on availability
- Usually: allow overwriting files when the process' security labels match exactly
Type Enforcement Model (TE)
Secondary Access Control Matrix that gives MAC priority over DAC

- Domains and Types
  - Assigns subjects to domains
  - Assigns objects to types
  - Matrix defines permitted domain-domain and domain-type interactions
- SE Linux = Security-Enhanced Linux
  - Both subjects and objects are types
  - Matrix defines allowed type pairs
  - Each process has a security ID, user ID, and group ID
  - Security modules may be added with rules that operate on SIDs

Role-Based Access Control (RBAC)
- More general than Bell-LaPadula
- Designed to allow enforcement of both MAC & DAC properties
- Access decisions do not depend on user IDs but on roles
  - Administrators define roles for various job functions
  - Each role contains permissions to perform certain operations
  - Users are assigned one or more roles
- Roles are job functions, not permissions
  - "update customer information" is a role
  - "write to the database" is not a role
- Enables fine-grained access
  - Roles may be defined in application specific ways (e.g., "move funds")

RBAC Rules
- Role assignment
  - A subject can execute an operation only if the subject has been assigned a role
- Role authorization
  - A subject’s active role must be authorized for that subject
  - Ensures that users can only take on roles for which they have been authorized
- Transaction authorization
  - A subject can execute a transaction only if the transaction is authorized through the subject’s role membership

RBAC is essential to database security

AREN'T ROLES == GROUPS?
- Group = collection of users
  - Does not enable management of user-permission relationships
- Role = collection of permissions
  - Permissions can be associated with users and groups
- Roles have a session
  - Users can activate a role
- In SE Linux, RBAC is built on top of TE (type enforcement)
  - Users mapped to roles at login time
  - Roles are authorized for domains
  - Domains are given permissions to types

RBAC Benefits
- RBAC is hugely popular in large companies
  - Driven by regulations such as HIPAA and Sarbanes-Oxley
- Makes it easy to manage movement of employees
- Makes it easy to manage "separation of duty" requirements
- Can manage complex relationships
  - Doctor X wants to view records of Patient Y
  - Doctor needs roles of "Doctor" and "attending doctor with respect to Y"
  - Roles allow specification of only if, not if or and only if relations
- RBAC can simulate MAC and DAC

Biba Integrity Model
- Bell-LaPadula was designed to address confidentiality
- Biba is designed to ensure data integrity
  - Motivation: Preserve data integrity.
    - If one program gets hacked, it will not be able to modify data at higher levels of integrity
  - Confidentiality = constraints on who can read data
  - Integrity = constraints on who can write data

Biba model properties
- Simple Security Property
  - A subject cannot read an object from a lower integrity level (no read down)
- Star property
  - A subject cannot write to an object at a higher integrity level
    - Subjects may not corrupt objects at a higher level than the subject (no write up)
  - A process cannot request higher access
Security Risks

• Even administrators should not be able to read all files
  – Many security systems enforce this
  – Edward Snowden should not have been able to copy sensitive documents onto a thumb drive … even if NSA policy banned thumb drives

• General assumption has been that programs are trusted and run with the user’s privileges

• Worked well for system programs

• Do you trust the game you installed on your phone?

• Need to consider better application isolation
  – Android turned Linux into a single-user system
  – User IDs are used on a per-application bases

Program-Based Control

• A lot of access decisions must be handled by programs, not the OS
  – Database users and the access each one has
  – Microsoft Exchange & Active Directory administrators
  – Mail readers
  – Web servers – especially those providing web services
  – Movement of data over a network
  – How do you send access permissions to another system?
  – Digital rights management = requires trusted players

• Programs may implement RBAC (e.g., Exchange) or other mechanisms
  – But the OS does not help

Access Models: Summary

• Discretionary Access Control
  – Works great when it’s ok to put the user is in charge

• Mandatory Access Control
  – Needed when an organization needs to define policies
  – Bell-LaPadula (BLP)
    – Oldest & most widely studied model – synonymous with MLS
    – Designed to protect confidentiality
    – Doesn’t work well outside of the DoD … and is clunky within the DoD
  – Type Enforcement (TE)
    – Simple MAC model to override DAC
  – Role-Based Access Control (RBAC)
    – Identifies roles and assigns users to roles
    – Made popular by business needs
    – Most actively used MAC model
  – Bidi Model
    – Opposite of Bell-LaPadula: concerned with integrity, not confidentiality

Biba Problems

• Like Bell-LaPadula, it doesn’t always fit the real world

• Microsoft implemented Mandatory Integrity Control (Biba model)
  – File objects are marked with an integrity level:
    – Critical Sec. Systems
    – Regular users and objects: medium
    – Elevated users: High
    – Internet Explorer: Low
  – New process gets the minimum of the user integrity level and the file integrity level
  – Default policy = NoWriteUp
    – Goal: Anything downloaded with IE can read files but cannot write them – limit damage done by malware
  – Users get used to the pop-up dialog boxes asking for permissions!
  – Microsoft dropped the NoReadDown restriction
  – Did not end up protecting the system from users

Security Risks

• Even if the mechanisms work perfectly, policies may fail
  – DAC: you’re trusting the users or a sysadmin to set everything up correctly
  – MAC
    – User or role assignment may be incorrect
    – Collaboration needs to be considered
    – Models like Bell-LaPadula and Biba require overrides to function well

• Corruption
  – Attacks may change the definition of roles or the mapping of users to roles
  – This is an attack on the Trusted Computing Base

• Users
  – Most malware is installed willingly
  – Users thus give it privileges of – at least – normal applications
  – As far as the operating system is concerned, it is enforcing defined policy

An example of where Biba is useful

The Biba model fits many real-world applications

• ECG device
  – Runs a calibration process, which stores a calibration file
  – And user processes, that run ECG tests

• Normal users cannot write the calibration file but can read it
  – Can read data at higher levels (calibration = higher data level)
  – User process can read calibration data – but cannot modify it

• Calibration process can write data to lower levels
  – Calibration process can write to the user process – but cannot read user data

• Works well when you need to get data from a trusted device

Biba Problems

• Like Bell-LaPadula, it doesn’t always fit the real world

• Microsoft implemented Mandatory Integrity Control (Biba model)
  – File objects are marked with an integrity level:
    – Critical Sec. Systems
    – Regular users and objects: medium
    – Elevated users: High
    – Internet Explorer: Low
  – New process gets the minimum of the user integrity level and the file integrity level
  – Default policy = NoWriteUp
    – Goal: Anything downloaded with IE can read files but cannot write them – limit damage done by malware
  – Users get used to the pop-up dialog boxes asking for permissions!
  – Microsoft dropped the NoReadDown restriction
  – Did not end up protecting the system from users

Security Risks

• Even if the mechanisms work perfectly, policies may fail
  – DAC: you’re trusting the users or a sysadmin to set everything up correctly
  – MAC
    – User or role assignment may be incorrect
    – Collaboration needs to be considered
    – Models like Bell-LaPadula and Biba require overrides to function well

• Corruption
  – Attacks may change the definition of roles or the mapping of users to roles
  – This is an attack on the Trusted Computing Base

• Users
  – Most malware is installed willingly
  – Users thus give it privileges of – at least – normal applications
  – As far as the operating system is concerned, it is enforcing defined policy

An example of where Biba is useful

The Biba model fits many real-world applications

• ECG device
  – Runs a calibration process, which stores a calibration file
  – And user processes, that run ECG tests

• Normal users cannot write the calibration file but can read it
  – Can read data at higher levels (calibration = higher data level)
  – User process can read calibration data – but cannot modify it

• Calibration process can write data to lower levels
  – Calibration process can write to the user process – but cannot read user data

• Works well when you need to get data from a trusted device

Biba Problems

• Like Bell-LaPadula, it doesn’t always fit the real world

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Multi-Lateral Security

Subjects and objects have assigned classification labels
Rules control what you can read or write

Compartmentalization

Subjects & objects get security labels (compartments) in addition to security classification labels
If you do not have clearance for the label, you cannot access the data
- (TOP SECRET, UFO) cannot be read by someone with (TOP SECRET) clearance
- Neither can (SECRET, UFO)

Lattice Model

Graph representing access rights of different labels & levels

Lattice model

Data from two compartments = third compartment
- Creates more isolation
- Does not help with sharing
One option
- Allow multiple compartments at a lower level to be readable by a higher level
Multi-level & Lattice models

- Do not help downgrading data
  - Need special roles to relabel or declassify data
- Handling searches across compartments is difficult
  - No single entity will likely have rights to everything

Chinese Wall model

- Chinese wall = rules designed to prevent conflicts of interest
  - Common in financial industry
  - Separate corporate advisory & brokerage groups
  - Also in law firms and advertising agencies
- Separation of duty
  - A user can perform transaction A or B but not both
- Three layers of abstraction
  - Objects: files that contain resources about one company
  - Company groups = set of files relating to one company
  - Conflict classes: groups of competing company groups:
    - Coca-cola, Pepsi
    - American Airlines, United, Delta, Alaska Air

Chinese Wall model

- Basic rule
  - A subject can access objects from a company as long as it never accessed objects from competing companies.
- Simple Security property
  - A subject s can be granted access to an object o only if the object
    - Is in the same company group as objects already accessed by s
    - Or
    - o belongs to a different conflict class
- *-property
  - Write access is allowed only if
    - Access is permitted by the simple security property
    - And
    - No object was read which is in a different company dataset than the one for which write access is requested and contains unsanitized information
  - Sanitization = disguising a company’s identity

The end