

## Outline

- 1 Mandatory access control
- 2 Labels and lattices
- 3 LOMAC
- 4 SELinux

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## DAC vs. MAC

- Most people are familiar with *discretionary* access control (DAC)
  - Unix permission bits are an example
  - E.g., might set file `private` so that only group `friends` can read it:  
`-rw-r--- 1 dm friends 1254 Feb 11 20:22 private`
  - Anyone with access to information can further propagate that information at his/her discretion:  
`$ Mail sigint@enemy.gov < private`
- **Mandatory access control (MAC) can restrict propagation**
  - Security administrator may allow you to read but not disclose file
  - Not to be confused with Message Authentication Codes and Medium Access Control, also both “MAC”

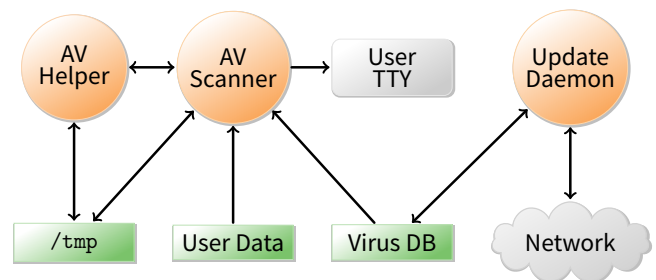
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## MAC motivation

- Prevent users from disclosing sensitive information (whether accidentally or maliciously)
  - E.g., classified information requires such protection
- Prevent software from surreptitiously leaking data
  - Seemingly innocuous software may steal secrets in the background
  - Such a program is known as a *trojan horse*
- Case study: Symantec AntiVirus 10
  - Contained a remote exploit (attacker could run arbitrary code)
  - Inherently required access to all of a user's files to scan them
  - Can an OS protect private file contents under such circumstances?

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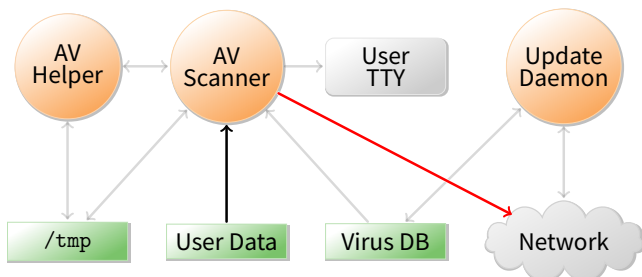
## Example: Anti-virus software



- Scanner – checks for virus signatures
- Update daemon – downloads new virus signatures
- How can OS enforce security without trusting AV software?
  - Must not leak contents of your files to network
  - Must not tamper with contents of your files

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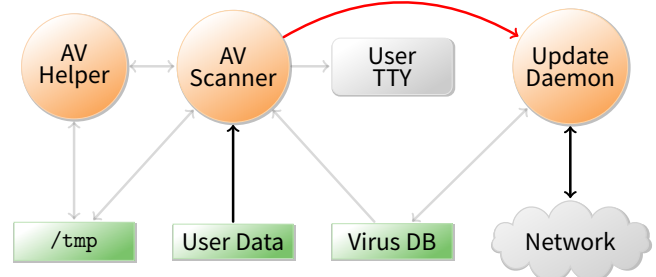
## Example: Anti-virus software



- Scanner can write your private data to network
- Prevent scanner from invoking any system call that might send a network messages?

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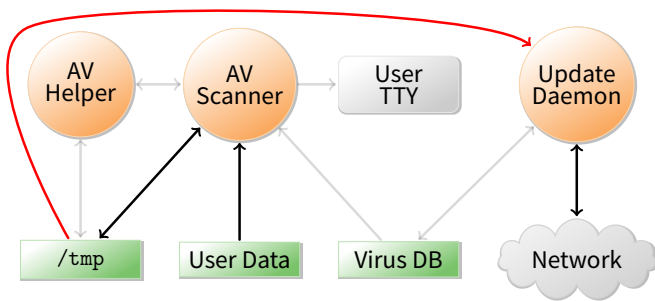
## Example: Anti-virus software



- Scanner can send private data to update daemon
- Update daemon sends data over network
  - Can cleverly disguise secrets in order/timing of update requests
- Block IPC & shared memory system calls in scanner?

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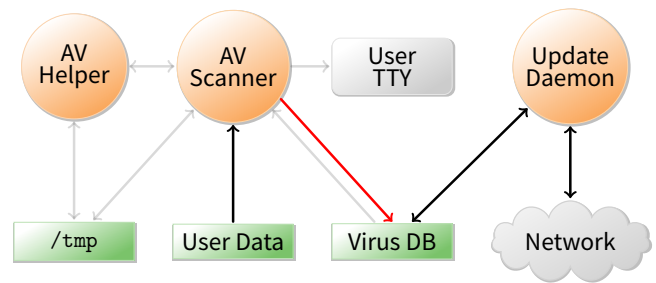
## Example: Anti-virus software



- Scanner can write data to world-readable file in /tmp
- Update daemon later reads and discloses file
- Prevent update daemon from using /tmp?

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## Example: Anti-virus software



- Scanner can acquire read locks on virus database
  - Encode secret user data by locking various ranges of file
- Update daemon decodes data by detecting locks
  - Discloses private data over the network
- Have trusted software copy virus DB for scanner?

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## The list goes on

- Scanner can call `setproctitle` with user data
  - Update daemon extracts data by running `ps`
- Scanner can bind particular TCP or UDP port numbers
  - Sends no network traffic, but detectable by update daemon
- Scanner can relay data through another process
  - Call `ptrace` to take over process, then write to network
  - Use `sendmail`, `httpd`, or `portmap` to reveal data
- Disclose data by modulating free disk space
- Can we ever convince ourselves we've covered all possible communication channels?
  - Not without a more systematic approach to the problem

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## Bell-La Padula model [BL]

- View the system as subjects accessing objects
  - Access control: take *requests* as input and output *decisions*
- Four modes of access are possible:
  - execute – no observation or alteration
  - read – observation
  - append – alteration
  - write – both observation and modification
- An *access matrix*  $M$  encodes permissible access types
  - As in last lecture, subjects are rows, objects are columns
- The *current access set*,  $b$ , is (subj, obj, attr) triples
  - Encodes accesses in progress (e.g., open files)
  - At a minimum,  $(S, O, A) \in b$  requires  $A$  permitted by cell  $M_{S,O}$

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## Security levels

- A *security level or label* is a pair  $(c, s)$  where:
  - $c$  = classification – E.g., 1 = unclassified, 2 = secret, 3 = topsecret
  - $s$  = category-set – E.g., Nuclear, Crypto
- $(c_1, s_1)$  *dominates*  $(c_2, s_2)$  iff  $c_1 \geq c_2$  and  $s_1 \supseteq s_2$ 
  - $L_1$  *dominates*  $L_2$  is sometimes written  $L_1 \times L_2$  or  $L_1 \sqsupseteq L_2$
  - Labels then form a *lattice* (partial order with lub & glb)
- Inverse of *dominates* relation is *can flow to*, written  $\sqsubseteq$ 
  - $L_1 \sqsubseteq L_2$  (“ $L_1$  can flow to  $L_2$ ”) means  $L_2$  dominates  $L_1$
- Subjects and objects are assigned security levels
  - $\text{level}(S)$ ,  $\text{level}(O)$  – security level of subject/object
  - $\text{current-level}(S)$  – subject may operate at lower level
  - $\text{level}(S)$  bounds  $\text{current-level}(S)$  ( $\text{current-level}(S) \sqsubseteq \text{level}(S)$ )
  - Since  $\text{level}(S)$  is max, sometimes called  $S$ 's *clearance*

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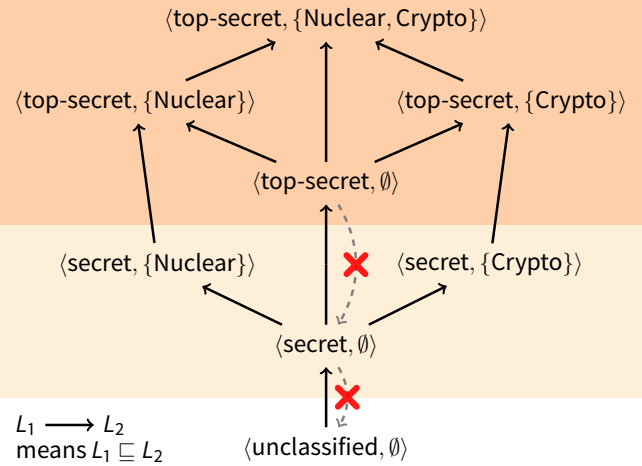
## Security properties

Two access control properties with respect to labels:

- **The simple security or *ss-property* (DAC):**
  - For any  $(S, O, A) \in b$ , if  $A$  includes observation, then  $\text{level}(S)$  must dominate  $\text{level}(O)$ , i.e.,  $\text{level}(O) \sqsubseteq \text{level}(S)$
  - E.g., an unclassified user cannot read a top-secret document
- **The star security or *\*-property* (MAC):**
  - If any subject observes  $O_1$  and modifies  $O_2$ , then  $\text{level}(O_2)$  dominates  $\text{level}(O_1)$ , i.e.,  $\text{level}(O_1) \sqsubseteq \text{level}(O_2)$ .
  - E.g., no subject can read a top secret file, then write a secret file
  - More precisely, given  $(S, O, A) \in b$ :
    - if  $A = r$  then  $\text{level}(O) \sqsubseteq \text{current-level}(S)$  "no read up"
    - if  $A = a$  then  $\text{current-level}(S) \sqsubseteq \text{level}(O)$  "no write down"
    - if  $A = w$  then  $\text{current-level}(S) = \text{level}(O)$

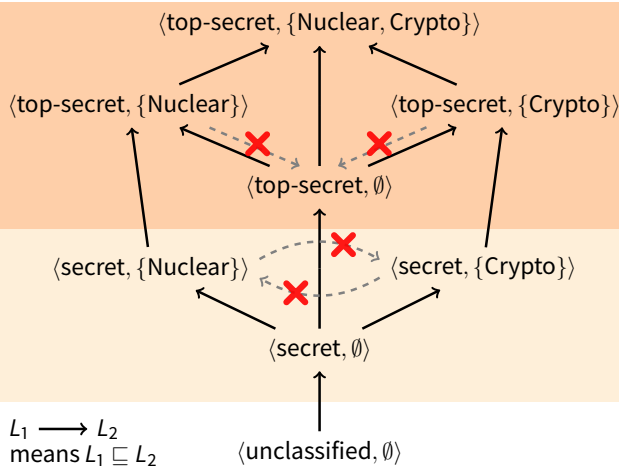
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## Labels form a lattice [Denning]



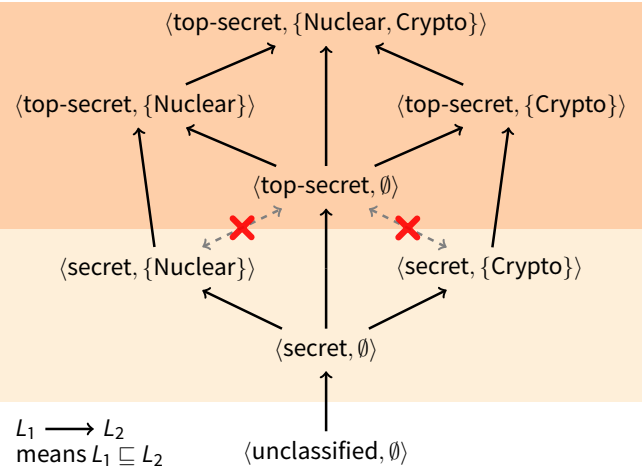
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## Labels form a lattice [Denning]



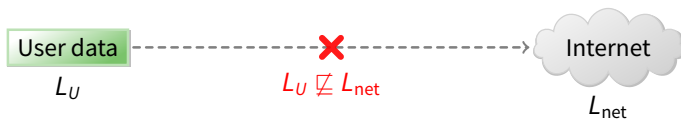
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## Labels form a lattice [Denning]



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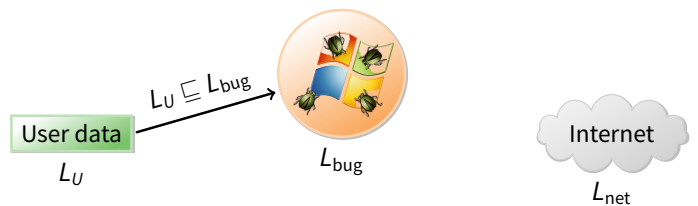
## $\sqsubseteq$ is transitive



- Transitivity makes it easier to reason about security
- Example: Label user data so it cannot flow to Internet
  - Policy holds regardless of what other software does

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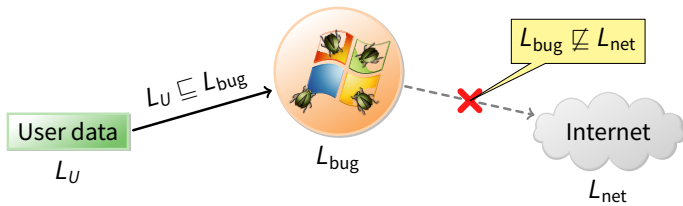
## $\sqsubseteq$ is transitive



- Transitivity makes it easier to reason about security
- Example: Label user data so it cannot flow to Internet
  - Policy holds regardless of what other software does
- Suppose untrustworthy software reads file

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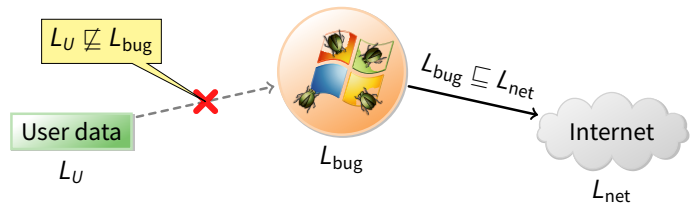
## $\sqsubseteq$ is transitive



- Transitivity makes it easier to reason about security
- Example: Label user data so it cannot flow to Internet
  - Policy holds regardless of what other software does
- Suppose untrustworthy software reads file
  - Process labeled  $L_{\text{bug}}$  reads file, so must have  $L_U \sqsubseteq L_{\text{bug}}$
  - If  $L_U \sqsubseteq L_{\text{bug}}$  and  $L_U \not\sqsubseteq L_{\text{net}}$ , it follows that  $L_{\text{bug}} \not\sqsubseteq L_{\text{net}}$ .

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## $\sqsubseteq$ is transitive



- Transitivity makes it easier to reason about security
- Example: Label user data so it cannot flow to Internet
  - Policy holds regardless of what other software does
- Conversely, a process that can write to the network cannot read the file

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## Straw man MAC implementation

- Take an ordinary Unix system
- Put labels on all files and directories to track levels
- Each user  $U$  assigned a security clearance, level( $U$ ), on login
- Determine current security level dynamically
  - When  $U$  logs in, start with lowest current-level
  - Increase current-level as higher-level files are observed (sometimes called a *floating label system*)
  - If  $U$ 's level does not dominate current-level, kill program
  - Kill program that writes to file if current label can't flow to file label
- Is this secure?

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## No: Covert channels

- System rife with *covert storage channels*
  - Low current-level process executes another program
  - New program reads sensitive file, gets high current-level
  - High program exploits covert channels to pass data to low
- E.g., high program inherits file descriptor
  - Can pass 4-bytes of information to low program in file offset
- Other storage channels:
  - Exit value, signals, file locks, terminal escape codes, ...
- If we eliminate storage channels, is system secure?

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## No: Timing channels

- Example: CPU utilization
  - To send a 0 bit, use 100% of CPU in busy-loop
  - To send a 1 bit, sleep and relinquish CPU
  - Repeat to transfer more bits
- Example: Resource exhaustion
  - High program allocates all physical memory if bit is 1
  - If low program slow from paging, knows less memory available
- More examples: Disk head position, processor cache/TLB pollution, ...

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## Reducing covert channels

- Observation: Covert channels come from sharing
  - If you have no shared resources, no covert channels
  - Extreme example: Just use two computers (common in DoD)
- Problem: Sharing needed
  - E.g., read unclassified data when preparing classified
- In general, can only hope to bound bandwidth of covert channels
- One approach: Strict partitioning of resources
  - Strictly partition and schedule resources between levels
  - Occasionally reapportion resources based on usage [Browne]
  - Do so infrequently to bound leaked information
  - Approach still not so good if many security levels possible

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## Declassification

- Sometimes need to prepare unclassified report from classified data
- Declassification happens outside of traditional access control model
  - Present file to security officer for downgrade
- Job of declassification often not trivial
  - E.g., Microsoft word saves a lot of undo information
  - This might be all the secret stuff you cut from document
  - Another bad mistake: Redact PDF using black censor bars over or under text, leaving text selectable (e.g., [Cluley])

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## Biba integrity model [Biba]

- **Problem: How to protect integrity**
  - Suppose text editor gets trojaned, subtly modifies files
  - Might mess up attack plans even without leaking anything
- **Observation: Integrity is the converse of secrecy**
  - In secrecy, want to avoid writing to lower-secrecy files
  - In integrity, want to avoid writing higher-integrity files
- **Use integrity hierarchy parallel to secrecy one**
  - Now *security level* is a  $\langle c, i, s \rangle$  triple, where  $i$  = integrity
  - $\langle c_1, i_1, s_1 \rangle \sqsubseteq \langle c_2, i_2, s_2 \rangle$  iff  $c_1 \leq c_2$  and  $i_1 \geq i_2$  and  $s_1 \subseteq s_2$
  - Only trusted users can operate at higher integrity (which is visually lower in the lattice—opposite of secrecy)
  - If you read less authentic data, your current integrity level gets lowered (putting you up higher in the lattice), and you can no longer write higher-integrity files

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## LOMAC [Fraser]

- MAC not widely accepted outside military
- LOMAC's goal: make MAC more palatable
  - Stands for Low water Mark Access Control
- Concentrates on Integrity
  - More important goal for many settings
  - E.g., don't want viruses tampering with all your files
  - Also don't have to worry as much about covert channels
- Provides reasonable defaults (minimally obtrusive)
- Has actually had impact
  - Originally available for Linux (2.2)
  - Now ships with FreeBSD
  - Windows introduced similar Mandatory Integrity Control (MIC)

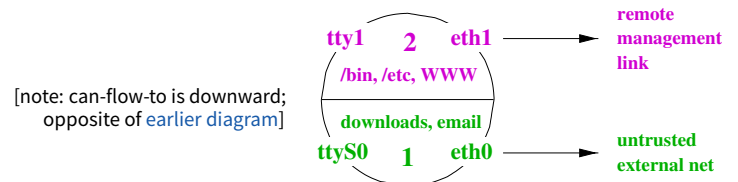
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## LOMAC overview

- Subjects are *jobs* (essentially processes)
  - Each subject labeled with an integrity number (e.g., 1, 2)
  - Higher numbers mean more integrity (so unfortunately  $2 \sqsubseteq 1$  by earlier notation)
  - Subjects can be reclassified on observation of low-integrity data
- Objects (files, pipes, etc.) also labeled w. integrity level
  - Object integrity level is fixed and cannot change
- Security: Low-integrity subjects cannot write to high integrity objects
- New objects have level of their creator

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## LOMAC defaults



- Two levels: 1 and 2
- Level 2 (high-integrity) contains:
  - FreeBSD/Linux files intact from distro, static web server config
  - The console, trusted terminals, trusted network
- Level 1 (low-integrity) contains
  - NICs connected to Internet, untrusted terminals, etc.
- Idea: Suppose worm compromises your web server
  - Worm comes from network → level 1
  - Won't be able to muck with system files or web server config

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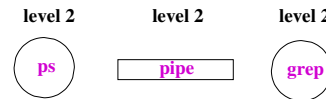
## The self-revocation problem

- Want to integrate with Unix unobtrusively
- Problem: Application expectations
  - Kernel access checks usually done at file open time
  - Legacy applications don't pre-declare they will observe low-integrity data
  - An application can "taint" itself unexpectedly, revoking its own permission to access an object it created

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## Self-revocation example

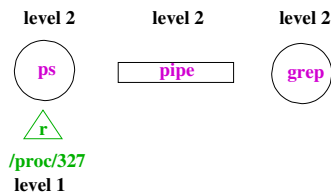
- User has high-integrity (level 2) shell
- Runs: `ps | grep user`
  - Pipe created before `ps` reads low-integrity data
  - `ps` becomes tainted, can no longer write to `grep`



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## Self-revocation example

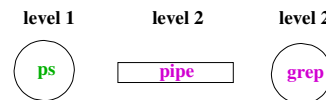
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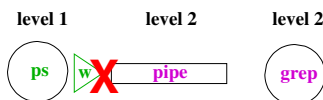
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## Solution

- Don't consider pipes to be real objects
- Join multiple processes together in a "job"
  - Pipe ties processes together in job
  - Any processes tied to job when they read or write to pipe
  - So will lower integrity of both `ps` and `grep`
- Similar idea applies to shared memory and IPC
- Summary: LOMAC applies MAC to non-military systems
  - But doesn't allow military-style security policies (i.e., with secrecy, various categories, etc.)

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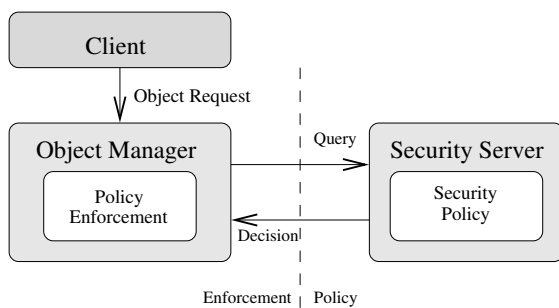
## The flask security architecture

- **Problem: Military needs adequate secure systems**
  - How to create civilian demand for systems military can use?
- **Idea: Separate policy from enforcement mechanism**
  - Most people will plug in simple DAC policies
  - Military can take system off-the-shelf, plug in new policy
- **Requires putting adequate hooks in the system**
  - Each object has manager that guards access to the object
  - Conceptually, manager consults security server on each access
- **Flask security architecture prototyped in fluke**
  - Now part of SELinux

Following figures from [Spencer]

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## Architecture



- Kernel mediates access to objects at “interesting” points
- Kicks decision up to external (user-level) security server

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## Challenges

- **Performance**
  - Adding hooks on every operation
  - People who don't need security don't want slowdown
- **Using generic enough data structures**
  - Object managers independent of policy still need to associate data structures (e.g., labels) with objects
- **Revocation**
  - May interact in a complicated way with any access caching
  - Once revocation completes, new policy must be in effect
  - Bad guy cannot be allowed to delay revocation completion indefinitely

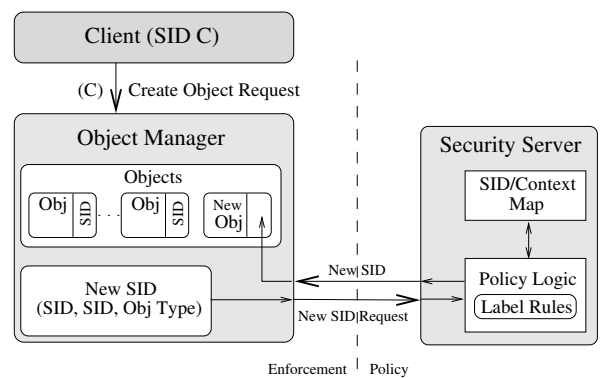
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## Basic flask concepts

- **All objects are labeled with a security context**
  - Security context is an arbitrary string—opaque to object manager in the kernel
- **Labels abbreviated with security IDs (SIDs)**
  - 32-bit integer, interpretable only by security server
  - Not valid across reboots (can't store in file system)
  - Fixed size makes it easier for object manager to handle
- **Queries to server done in terms of SIDs**
  - Create (client SID, old obj SID, obj type)? → SID
  - Allow (client SID, obj SID, perms)? → {yes, no}

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## Creating new object



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## Security server interface [Loscocco]

```
int security_compute_av(
    security_id_t ssid, security_id_t tsid,
    security_class_t tclass, access_vector_t requested,
    access_vector_t *allowed, access_vector_t *decided,
    __u32 *seqno);
```

- **ssid, tsid – source and target SIDs**
- **tclass – type of target**
  - E.g., regular file, device, raw IP socket, TCP socket, ...
- **Server can decide more than it is asked for**
  - access\_vector\_t is a bitmask of permissions
  - decided can contain more than requested
  - Effectively implements decision prefetching
- seqno **used for revocation (in a few slides)**

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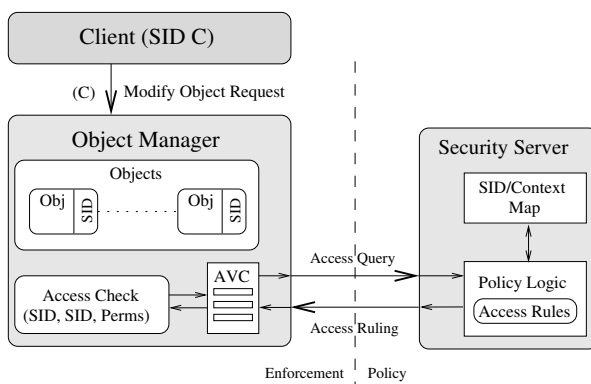
## Access vector cache (AVC)

- **Want to minimize calls into security server**
- **AVC caches results of previous decisions**
  - Note: Relies on simple enumerated permissions
- **Decisions therefore cannot depend on parameters:**
  - ✗ Andy can authorize expenses up to \$999.99
  - ✗ Bob can run processes at priority 10 or higher
- **Decisions also limited to two SIDs**
  - Complicates file relabeling, which requires 3 checks:

Source	Target	Permission checked
Subject SID	Old file SID	Relabel-From
Subject SID	New file SID	Relabel-To
Old file SID	New file SID	Transition-From

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## AVC in a query



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## AVC interface

```
int avc_has_perm_ref(
    security_id_t ssid, security_id_t tsid,
    security_class_t tclass, access_vector_t requested,
    avc_entry_ref_t *aeref);
```

- **avc\_entry\_ref\_t points to cached decision**
  - Contains ssid, tsid, tclass, decision vec., & recently used info
- **aeref argument is hint**
  - After first call, will be set to relevant AVC entry
  - On subsequent calls speeds up lookup
- **Example: New kernel check when binding a socket:**

```
ret = avc_has_perm_ref(
    current->sid, sk->sid, sk->sclass,
    SOCKET_BIND, &sk->avcr);
```

  - Now sk->avcr is likely to be speed up next socket op

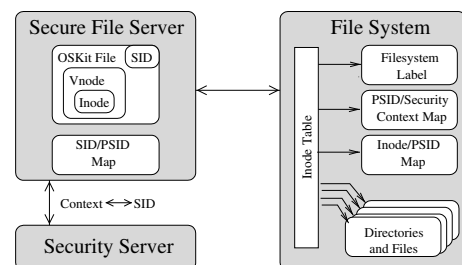
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## Revocation support

- **Decisions may be cached in AVC entries**
- **Decisions may implicitly be cached in migrated permissions**
  - E.g., Unix checks file write permission on *open*
  - But may want to disallow future writes even on open file
  - Write permission migrated into file descriptor
  - May also migrate into page tables/TLB w. mmap
  - Also may migrate into open sockets/pipes, or operations in progress
- **AVC contains hooks for callbacks**
  - After revoking in AVC, AVC makes callbacks to revoke migrated permissions
  - seqno can be used to ensure strict ordering of policy changes

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## Persistence



- **Must label persistent objects in file system**
  - Persistently map each file/directory to a security context
  - Security contexts are variable length, so add level of indirection
  - “Persistent SIDs” (PSIDs) – numbers local to each file system

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## Transitioning SIDs

- May need to relabel objects
  - E.g., files in file system
- Processes may also want to transition their SIDs
  - Depends on existing permission, but also on program
  - SELinux allows programs to be defined as *entrypoints*
  - Thus, can restrict with which programs users enter a new SID (similar to the way `setuid` transitions uid on program entry)

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## SELinux contexts

- In practice, SELinux contexts have four parts:

$\overbrace{\text{system\_u}}^{\text{user}} : \overbrace{\text{system\_r}}^{\text{role}} : \overbrace{\text{sshd\_t}}^{\text{type}} : \overbrace{\text{s0}}^{\text{level}}$

- *user* is not Unix user ID, e.g.:

```
$ id
uid=1000(dm) gid=1000(dm) groups=1000(dm) 119(admin)
context=unconfined_u:unconfined_r:unconfined_t:s0-s0:c0.c255
$ /bin/su
Password:
# id
uid=0(root) gid=0(root) groups=0(root)
context=unconfined_u:unconfined_r:unconfined_t:s0-s0:c0.c255
# newrole -r system_r -t sysadm_t
Password:
# id -Z
unconfined_u:system_r:sysadm_t:s0-s0:c0.c255
```

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## Users, roles, types

- SELinux user is assigned on login, based on rules

```
# semanage login -l
Login Name      SELinux User  MLS/MCS Range
__default__    unconfined_u  s0-s0:c0.c255
root           root_u        s0-s0:c0.c255
```

- A user is allowed to assume different roles w. `newrole`
- But roles are restricted by SELinux (not Unix) users

```
# semanage user -l
SELinux User  ... SELinux Roles
root          staff_r sysadm_r system_r
unconfined_u system_r unconfined_r
user_u        user_r
```

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## Types

- Each role allows only certain *types*
  - Can check with `seinfo -x --role=name`
- Types allow non-hierarchical security policies
  - Each subject is assigned a *domain*, each object a *type*
  - Policy stated in terms of what each domain can do each type
- Example: Suppose you wish to enforce that each invoice undergoes the following processing:
  - Receipt of the invoice recorded by a clerk
  - Receipt of the merchandise verified by purchase officer
  - Payment of invoice approved by supervisor
- Can encode state of invoice by its type
  - Set transition rules to enforce all steps of process

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## Example: Loading kernel modules

```
(1) allow sysadm_t insmod_exec_t:file x_file_perms;
(2) allow sysadm_t insmod_t:process transition;
(3) allow insmod_t insmod_exec_t:process { entrypoint execute };
(4) allow insmod_t sysadm_t:fd inherit_fd_perms;
(5) allow insmod_t self:capability sys_module;
(6) allow insmod_t sysadm_t:process sigchld;
```

1. Allow `sysadm` domain to run `insmod`
2. Allow `sysadm` domain to transition to `insmod`
3. Allow `insmod` program to be entrypoint for `insmod` domain
4. Let `insmod` inherit file descriptors from `sysadm`
5. Let `insmod` use `CAP_SYS_MODULE` (load a kernel module)
6. Let `insmod` signal `sysadm` with `SIGCHLD` when done

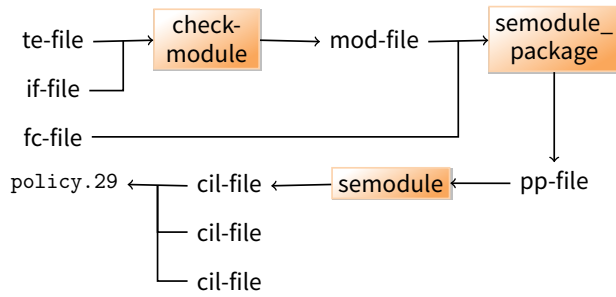
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## Policy specification

- Very complicated sets of rules
  - E.g., on Fedora, `sesearch --all | wc -l` shows 73K rules
  - Rules based mostly on types
- Allowed/restricted transitions very important
  - E.g., `init` can run `initscripts`, can run `httpd`
  - Nowadays `systemd` needs to be able to transition to arbitrary types
  - `httpd` program has special `httpd_exec_t` type, allows process to have `httpd_t` type.
  - Might label `public_html` directories so `httpd` can access them, but not access rest of home directory
- Can also use levels to enforce MLS
  - E.g., “:s0-s0:c0.c255” means process is at sensitivity `s0` with no categories, but has all categories in clearance.

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## Policy construction



- **Very low quality tooling around policy construction**
  - Broken build systems, incompatible kernel policy formats, ...
- **Hard to check `/sys/fs/selinux/policy` matches expectations**
  - No single-pass decompilation, tools seem to hang on real policies
  - Even rebuilding from source is hard (e.g., actual compilation happens during RPM install, using tons of spec macros)