Secure Architecture Principles

- Isolation and Least Privilege
- Access Control Concepts
- Operating Systems
- Browser Isolation and Least Privilege

Acknowledgments: Lecture slides are from the Computer Security course taught by Dan Boneh and John Mitchell at Stanford University. When slides are obtained from other sources, a a reference will be noted on the bottom of that slide. A full list of references is provided on the last slide.

Secure Architecture Principles

Isolation and Least Privilege

Principles of Secure Design

- Compartmentalization
  - Isolation
  - Principle of least privilege
- Defense in depth
  - Use more than one security mechanism
  - Secure the weakest link
  - Fail securely
- Keep it simple

Principle of Least Privilege

- What's a privilege?
  – Ability to access or modify a resource
- Assume compartmentalization and isolation
  – Separate the system into isolated compartments
  – Limit interaction between compartments
- Principle of Least Privilege
  – A system module should only have the minimal privileges needed for its intended purposes

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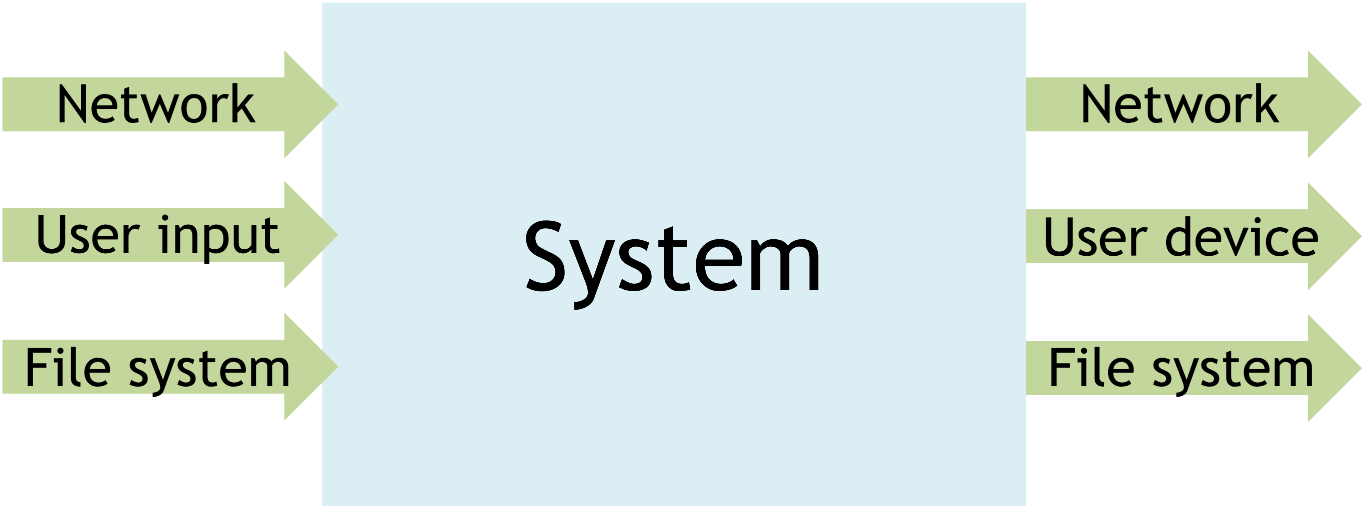
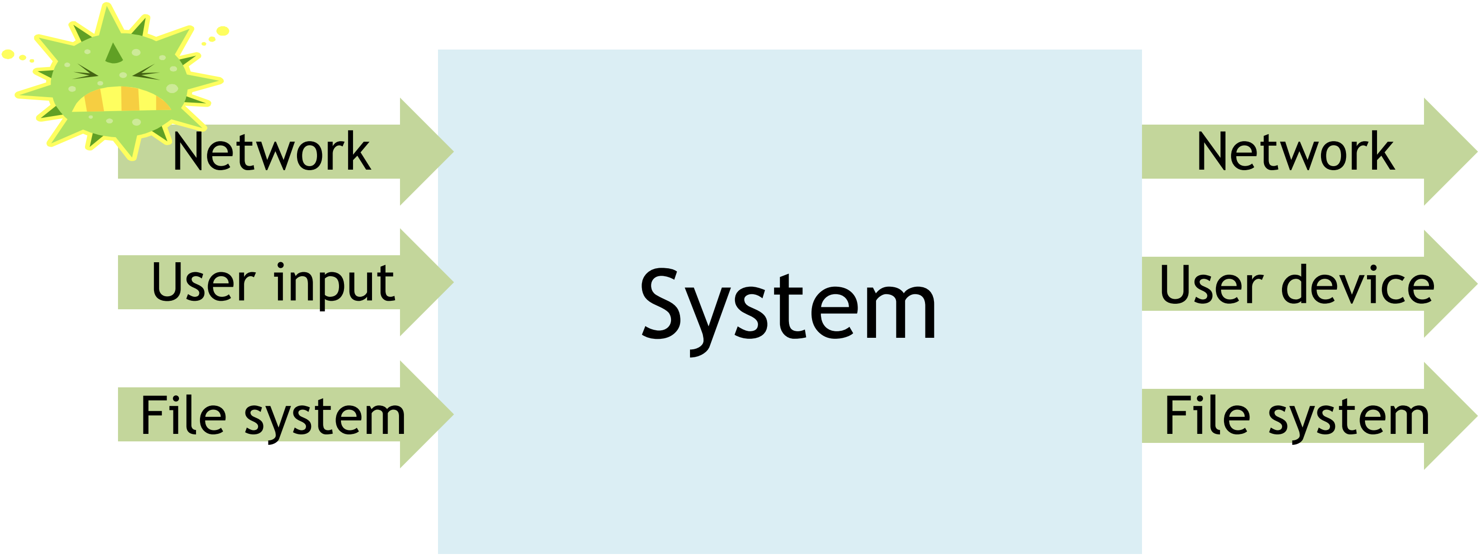
Monolithic design



John Mitchell

Monolithic design



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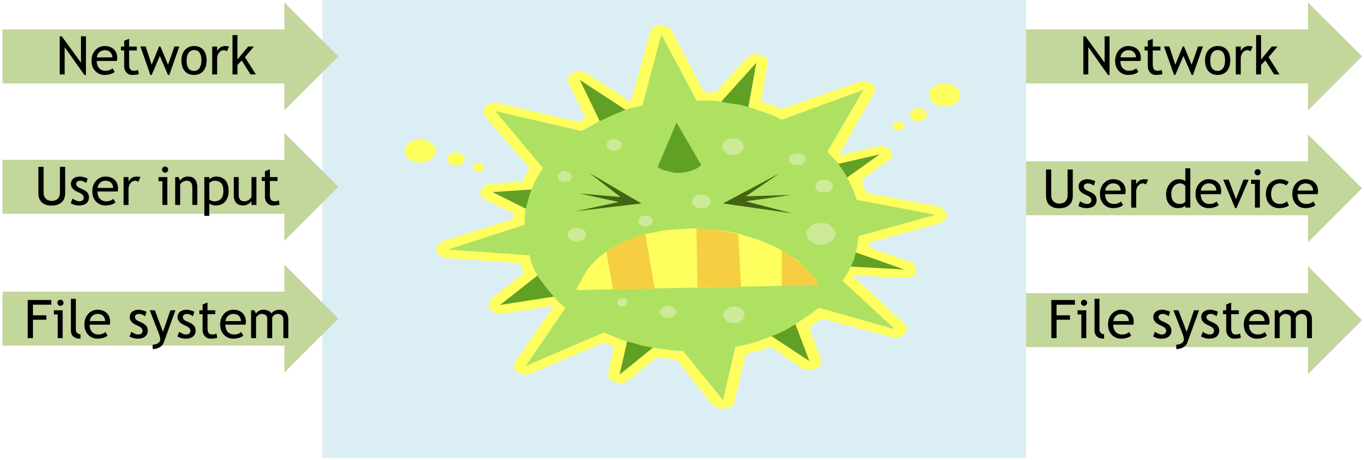
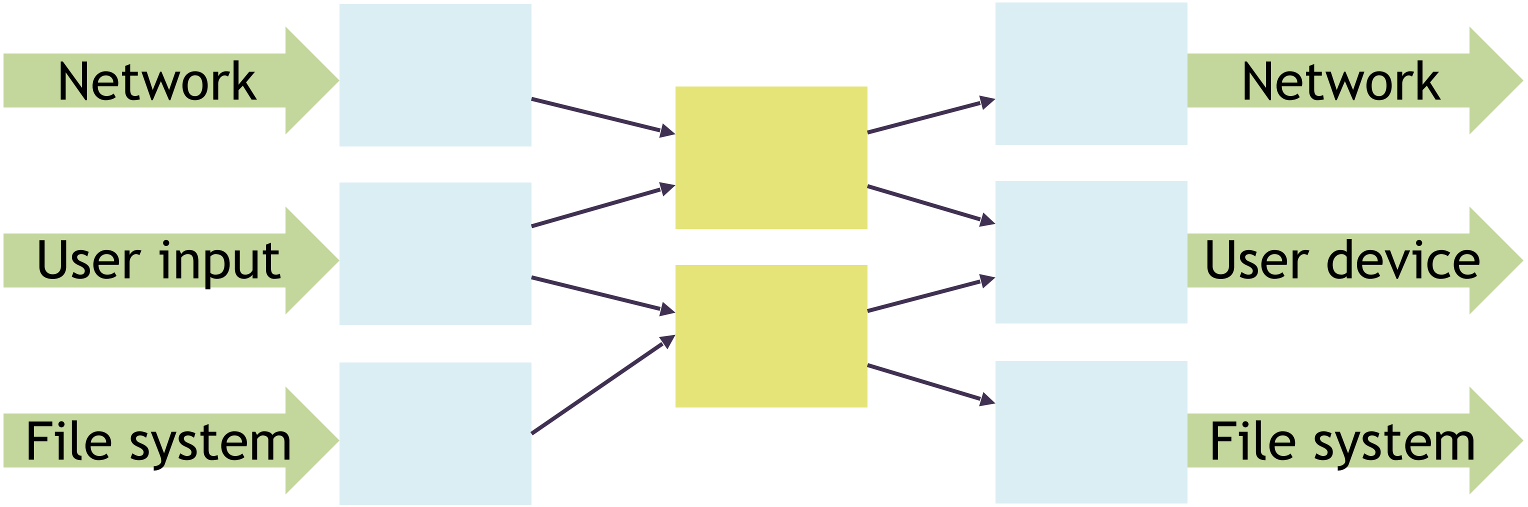
Monolithic design



Component design



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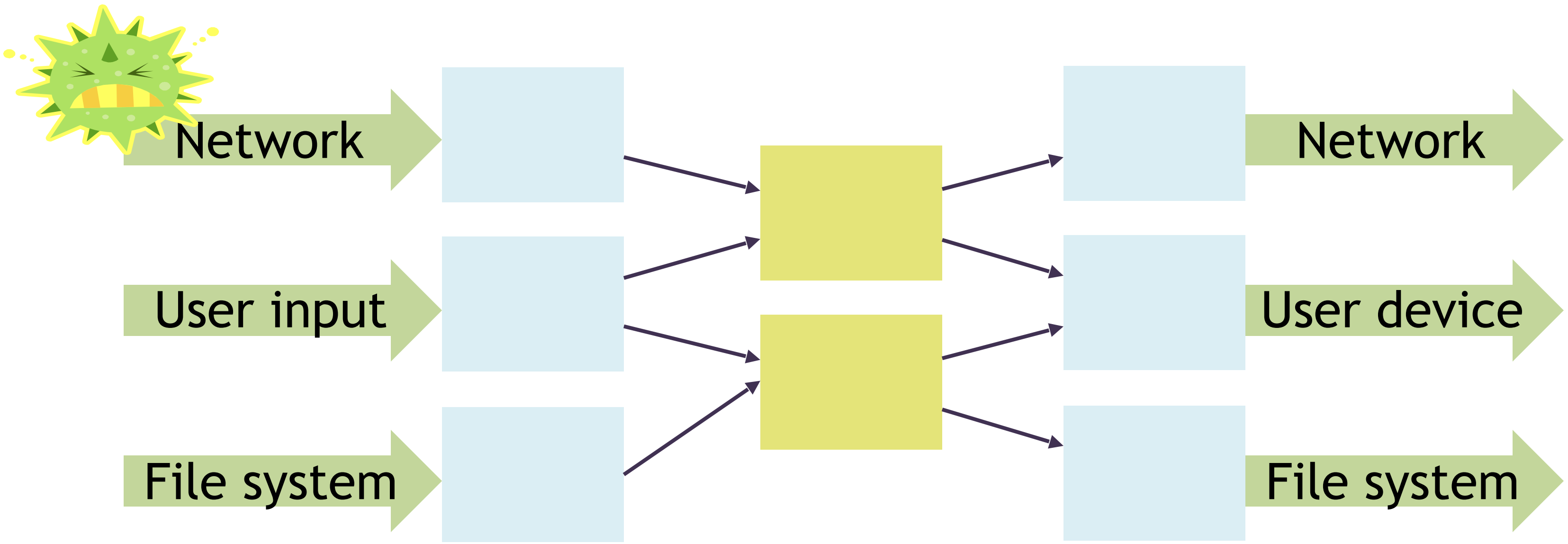
Component design



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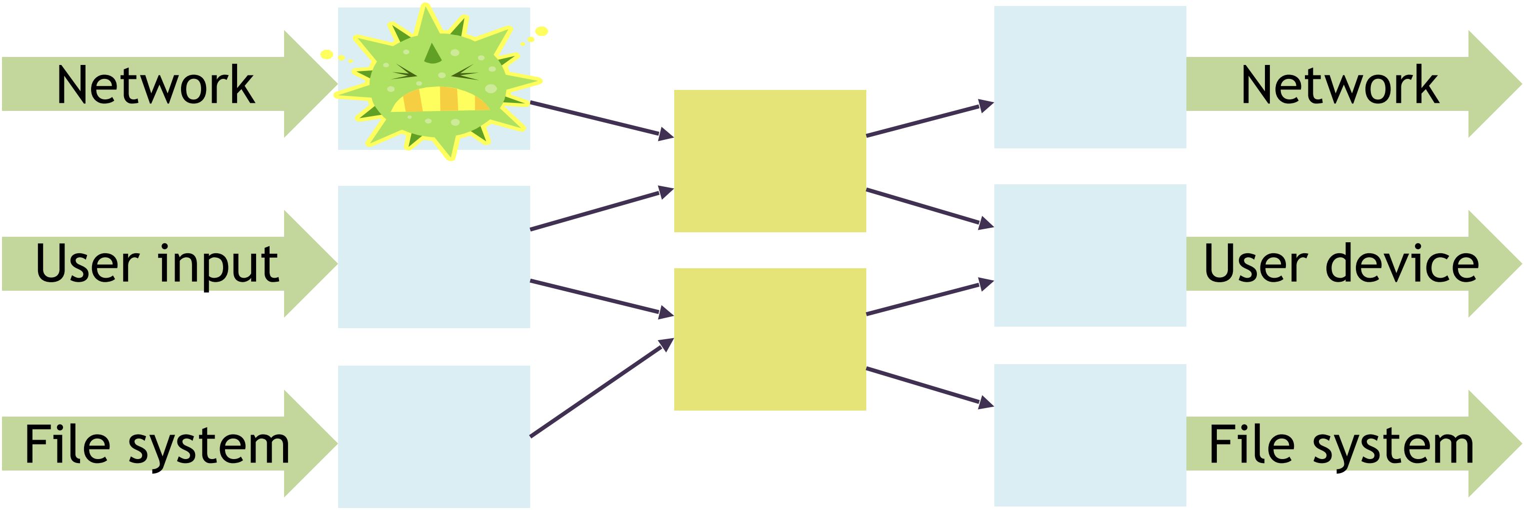
Component design



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Principle of Least Privilege

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Example: Mail Agent

- Requirements
  - Receive and send email over external network
  - Place incoming email into local user inbox files
- Sendmail
  - Traditional Unix
  - Monolithic design
  - Historical source of many vulnerabilities
- Qmail
  - Compartmentalized design

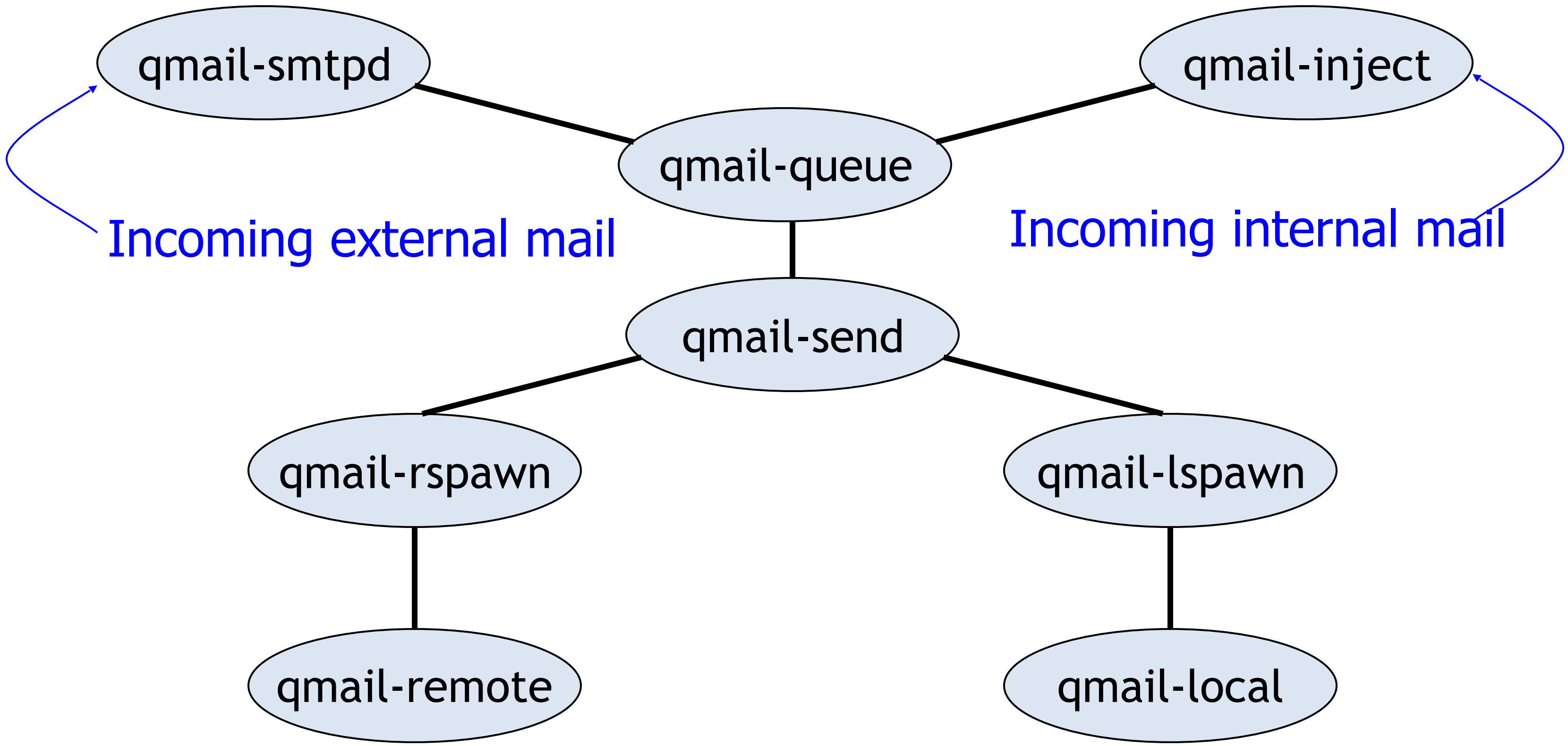
OS Basics (before examples)

- Isolation between processes
  - Each process has a UID
    - Two processes with same UID have same permissions
  - A process may access files, network sockets, ….
    - Permission granted according to UID
- Relation to previous terminology
  - Compartment defined by UID
  - Privileges defined by actions allowed on system resources

Qmail design

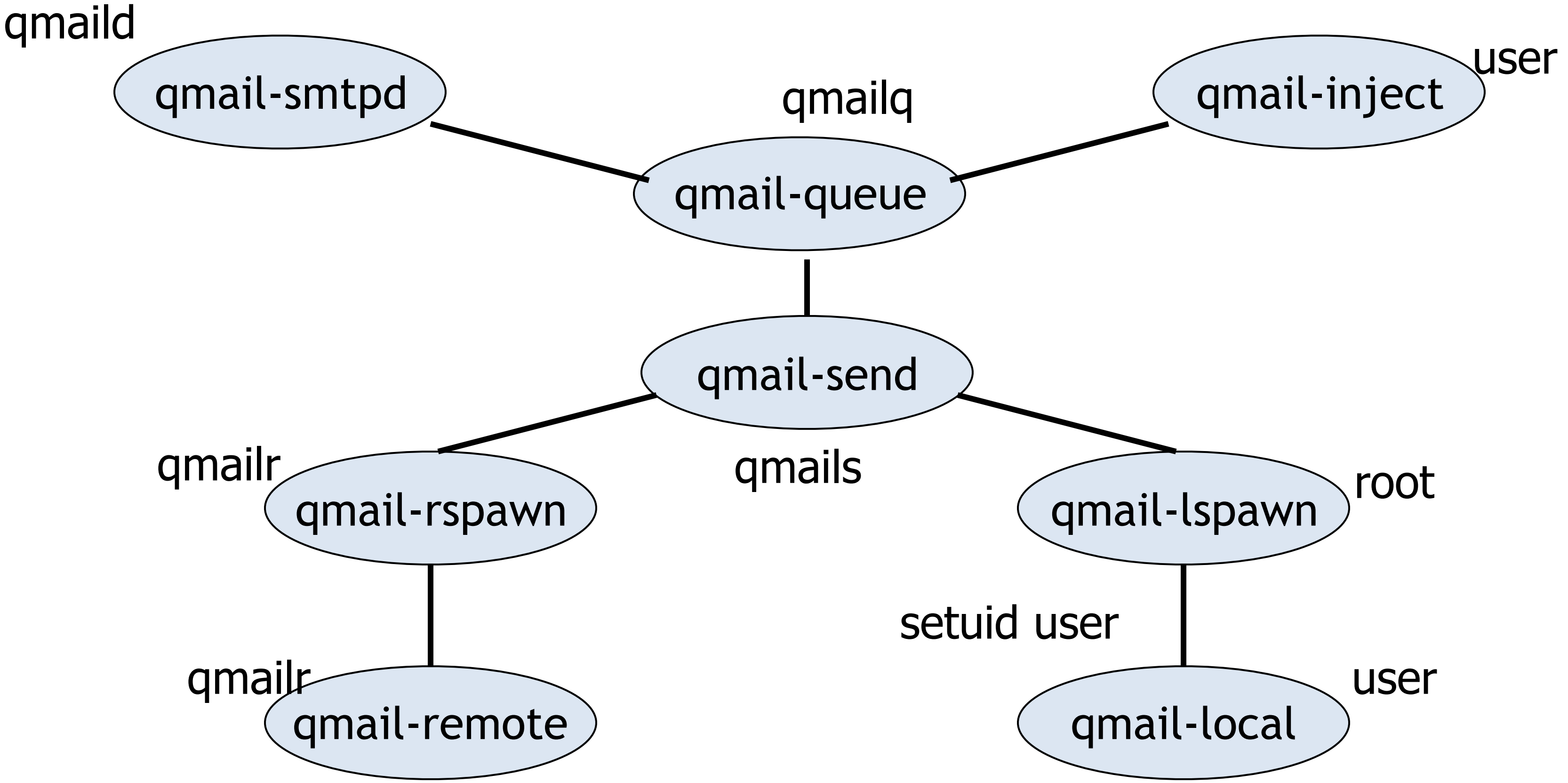
- Isolation based on OS isolation
  - Separate modules run as separate "users"
  - Each user only has access to specific resources
- Least privilege
  - Minimal privileges for each UID
  - Only one "setuid" program
    - setuid allows a program to run as different users
  - Only one "root" program
    - root program has all privileges

Structure of qmail

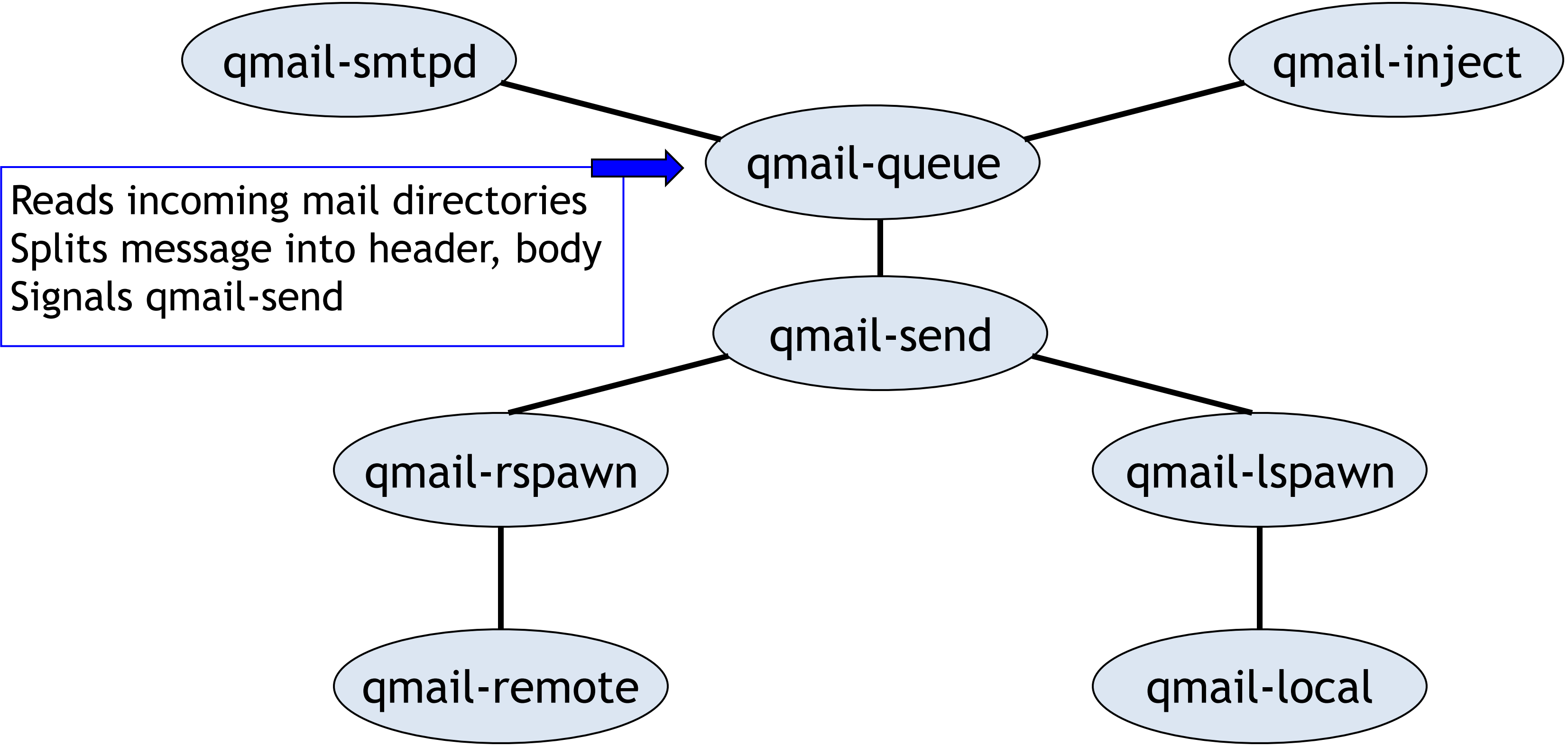


Isolation by Unix UIDs

qmailq – user who is allowed to read/write mail queue



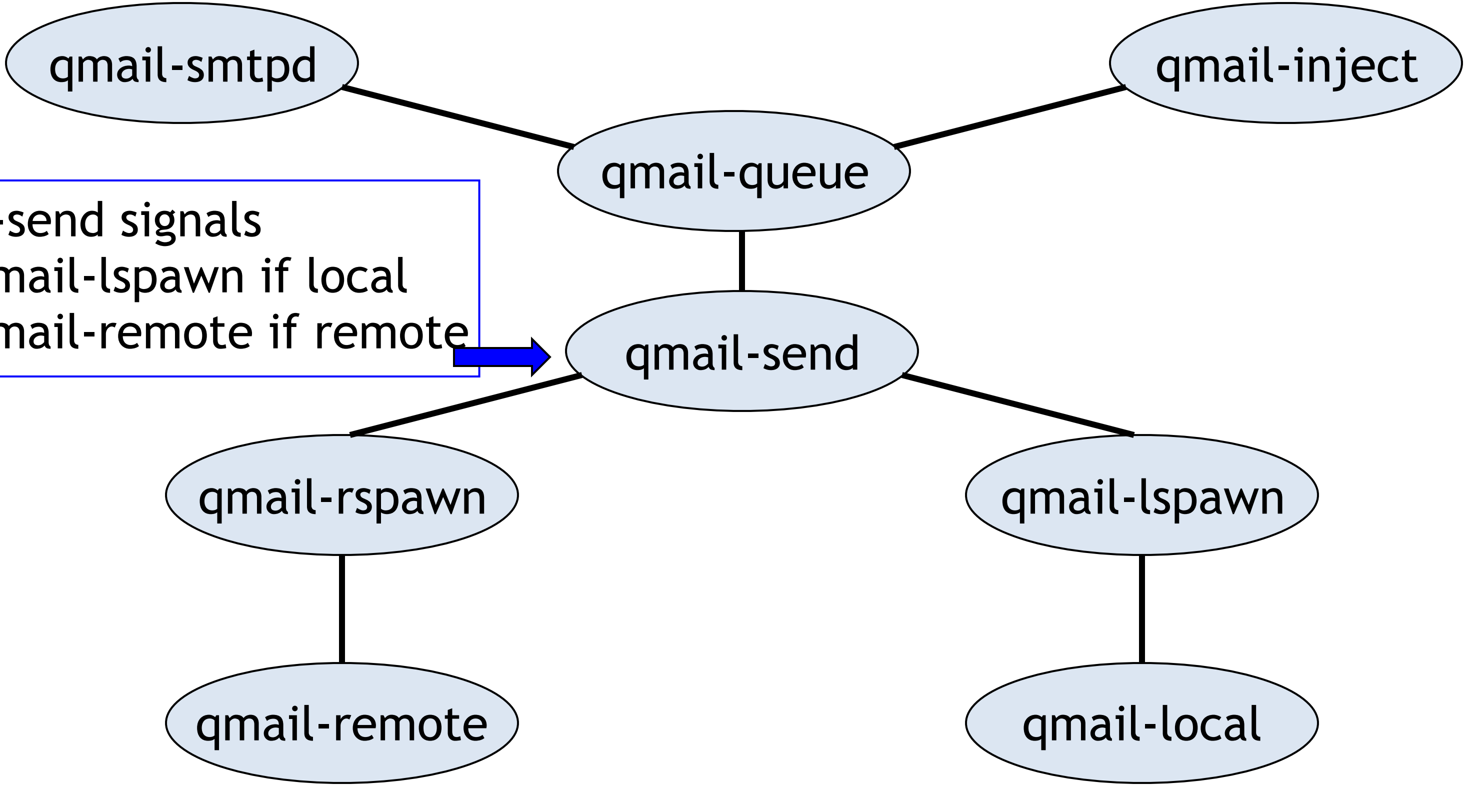
Structure of qmail



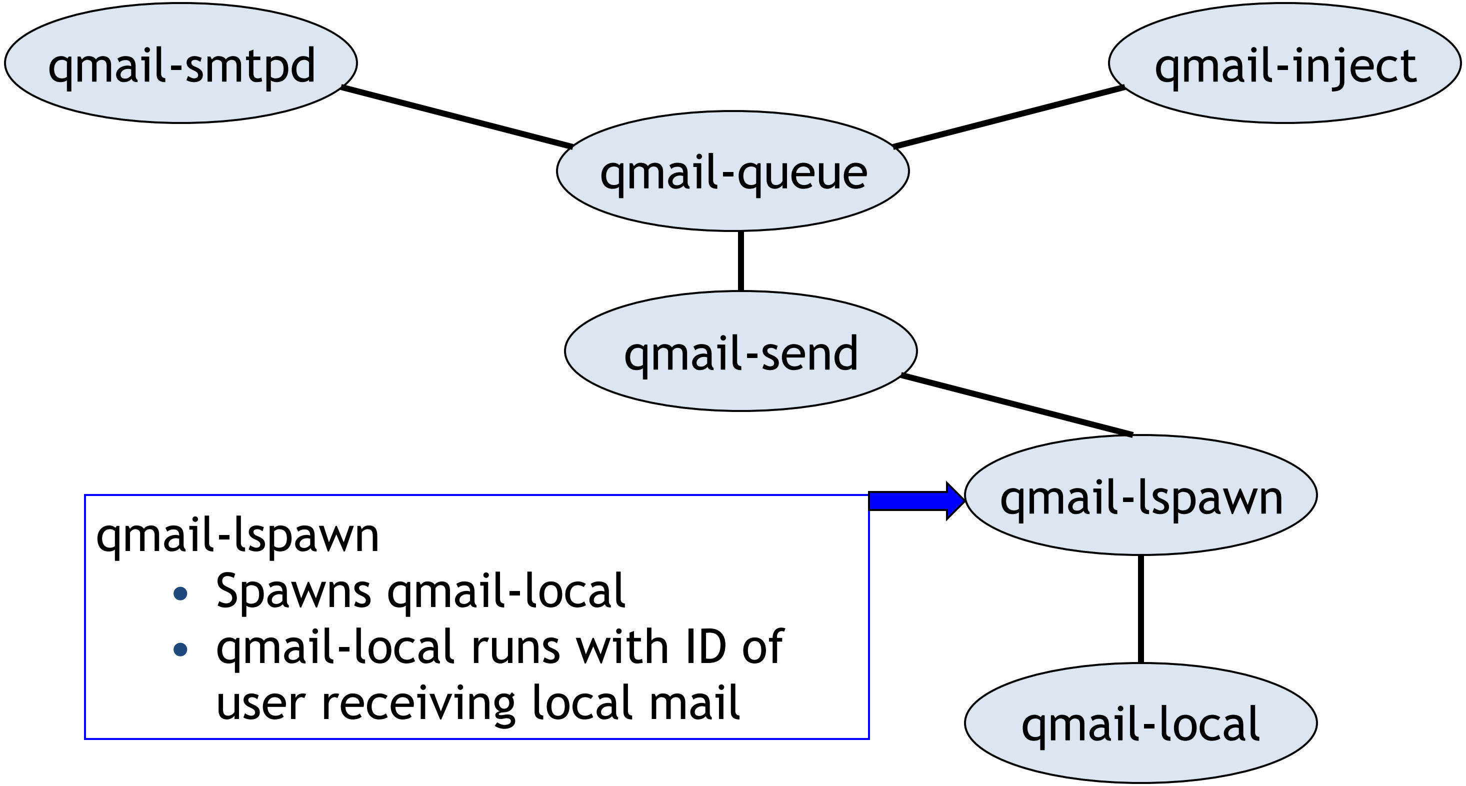
Structure of qmail

qmail-send signals

- qmail-lspawn if local
- qmail-remote if remote

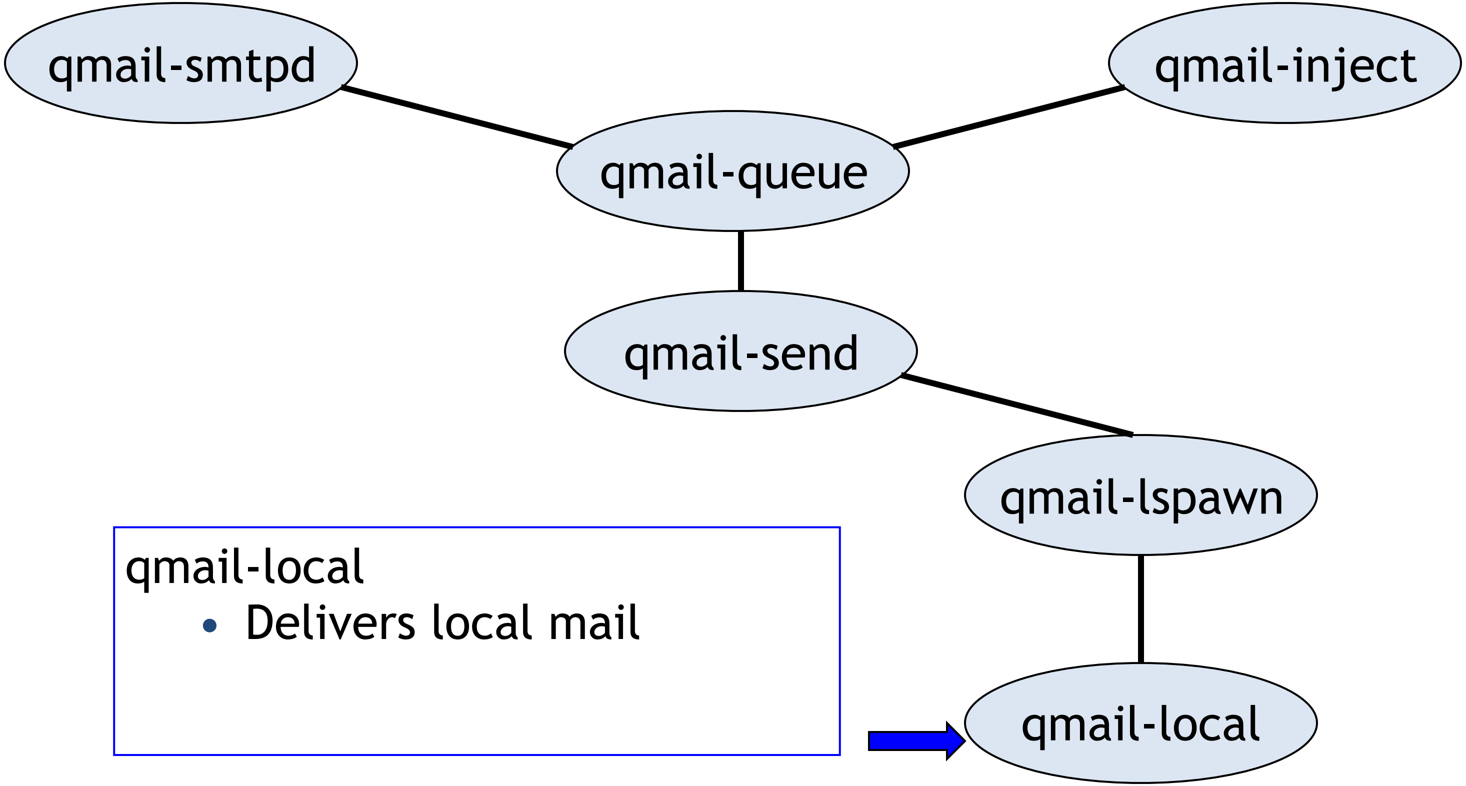


Structure of qmail



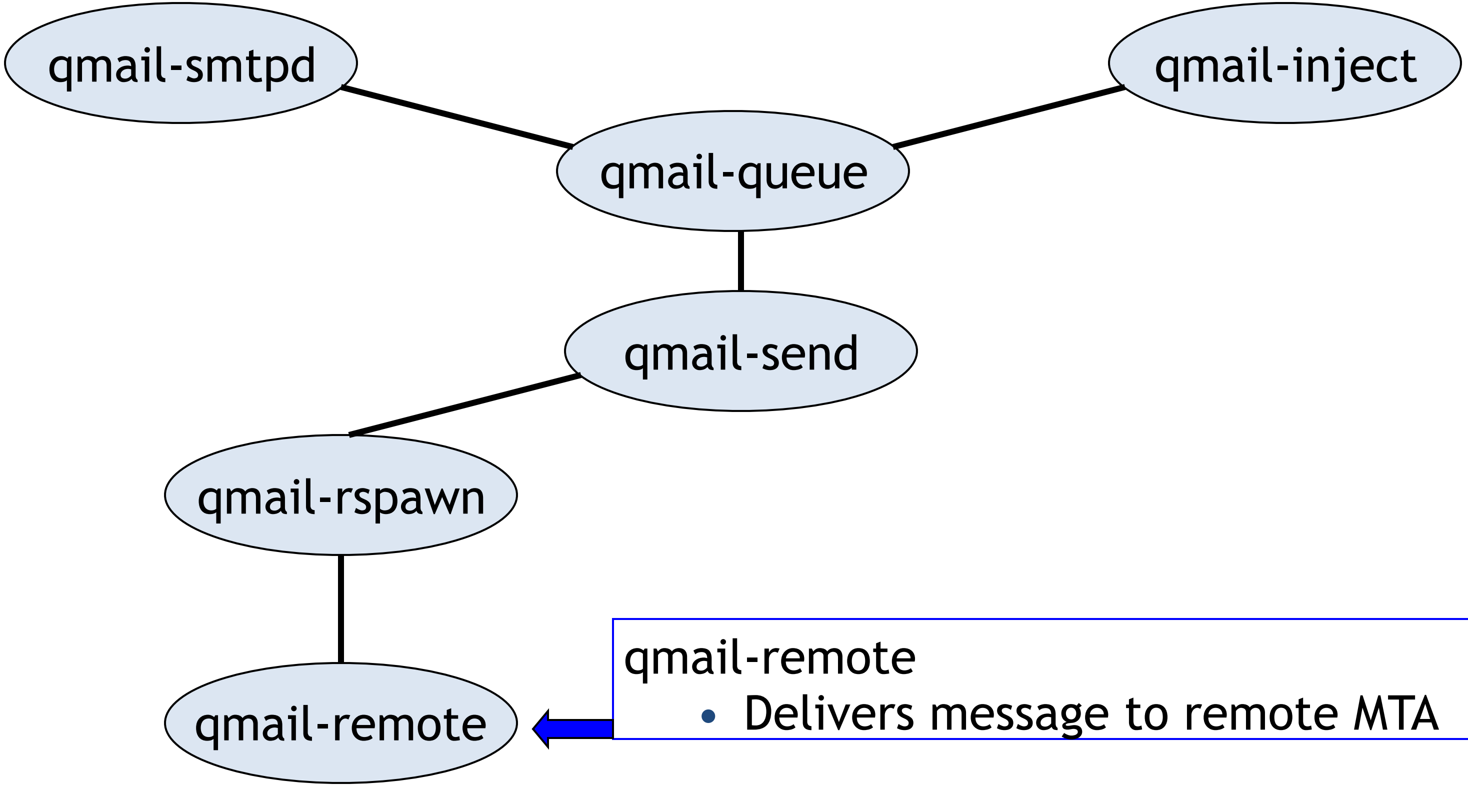
qmail-lspawn
- Spawns qmail-local
- qmail-local runs with ID of user receiving local mail

Structure of qmail



qmail-local
- Delivers local mail

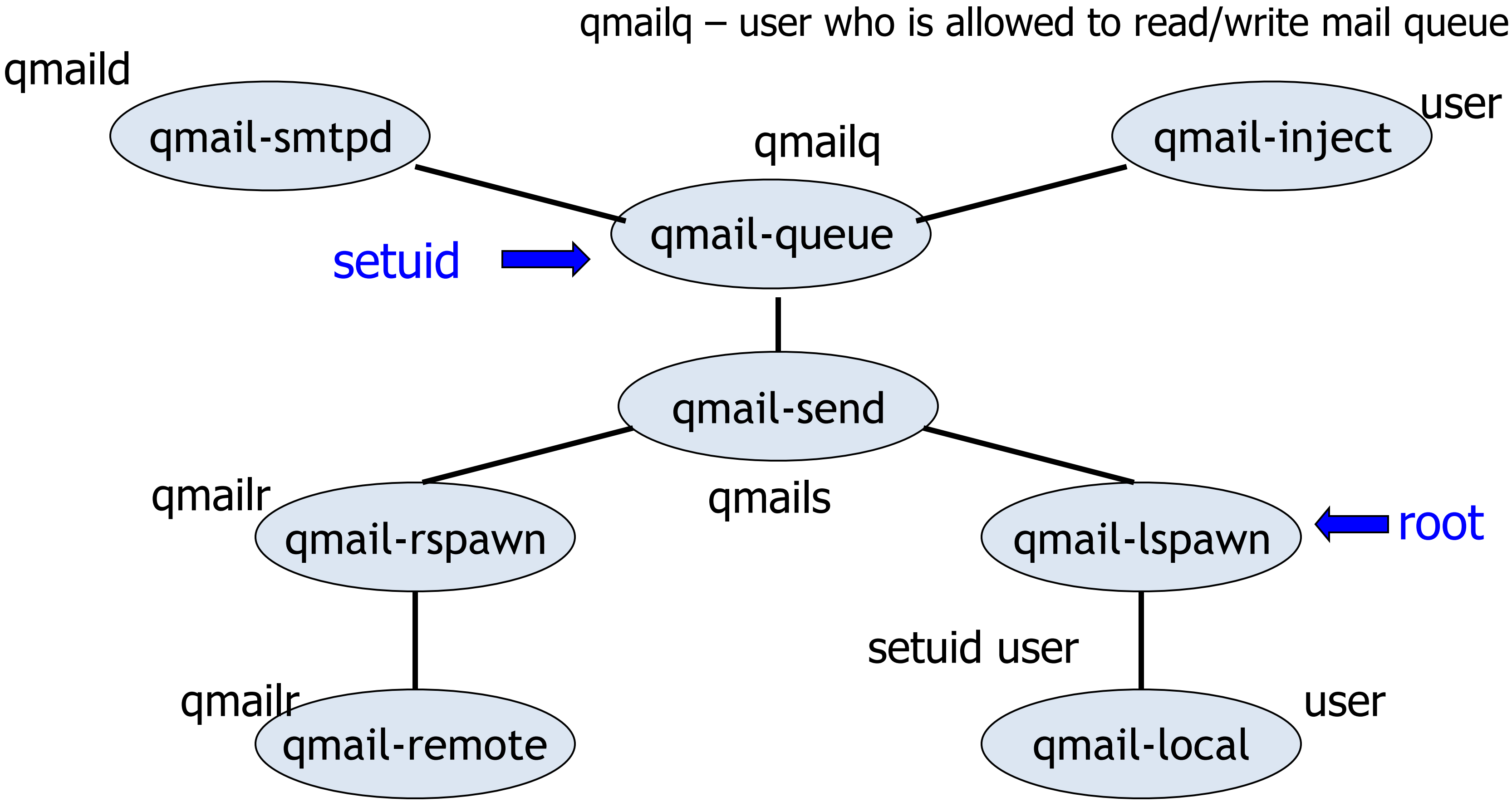
Structure of qmail



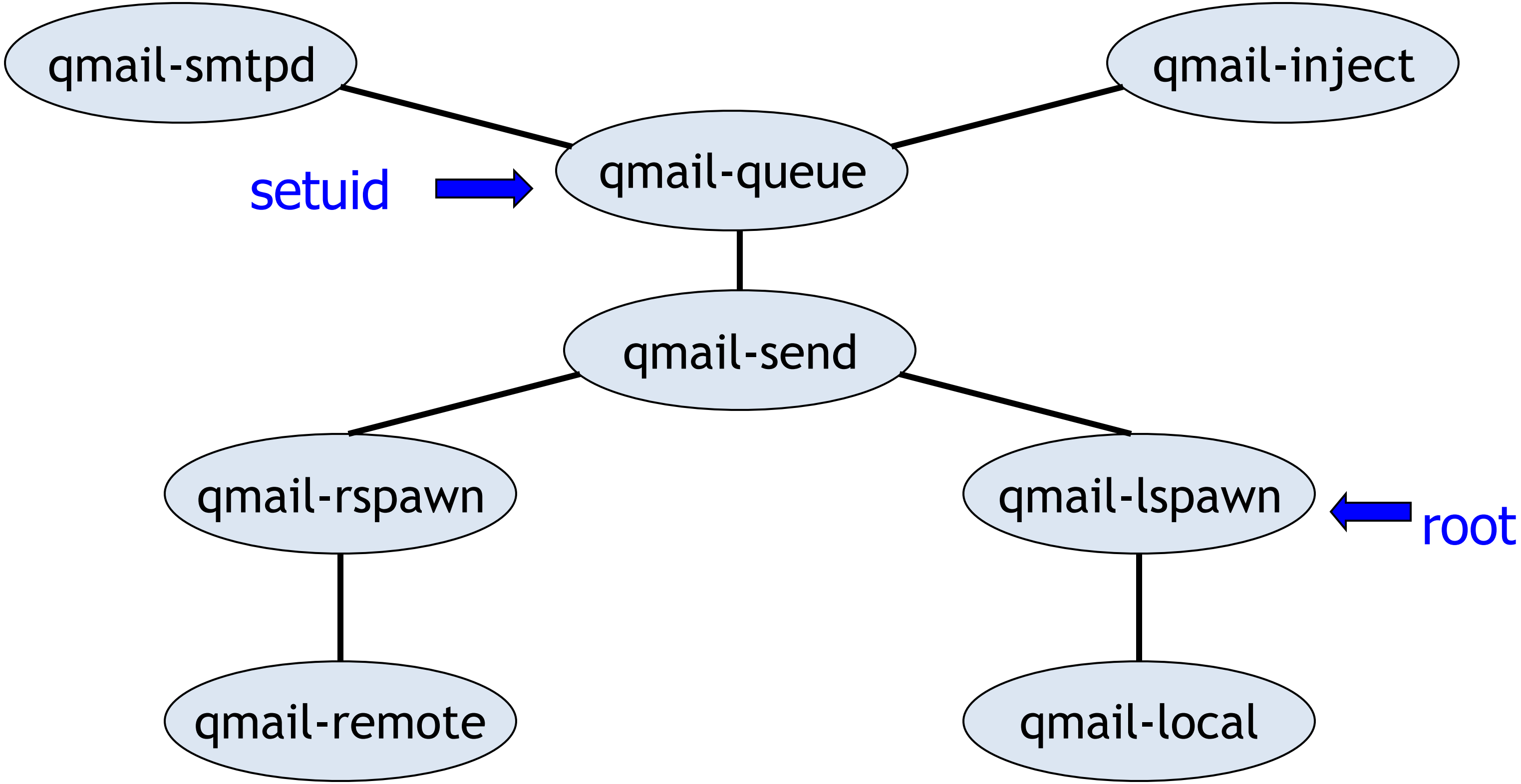
qmail-remote

- Delivers message to remote MTA

Isolation by Unix UIDs



Least privilege



Android process isolation

- Android application sandbox
  - Isolation: Each application runs with its own UID in own VM
    - Provides memory protection
    - Communication limited to using Unix domain sockets
    - Zygote (spawn another process) run as root
  - Interaction: reference monitor checks permissions on inter-component communication
  - Least Privilege: Applications announces permission
    - User grants access at install time

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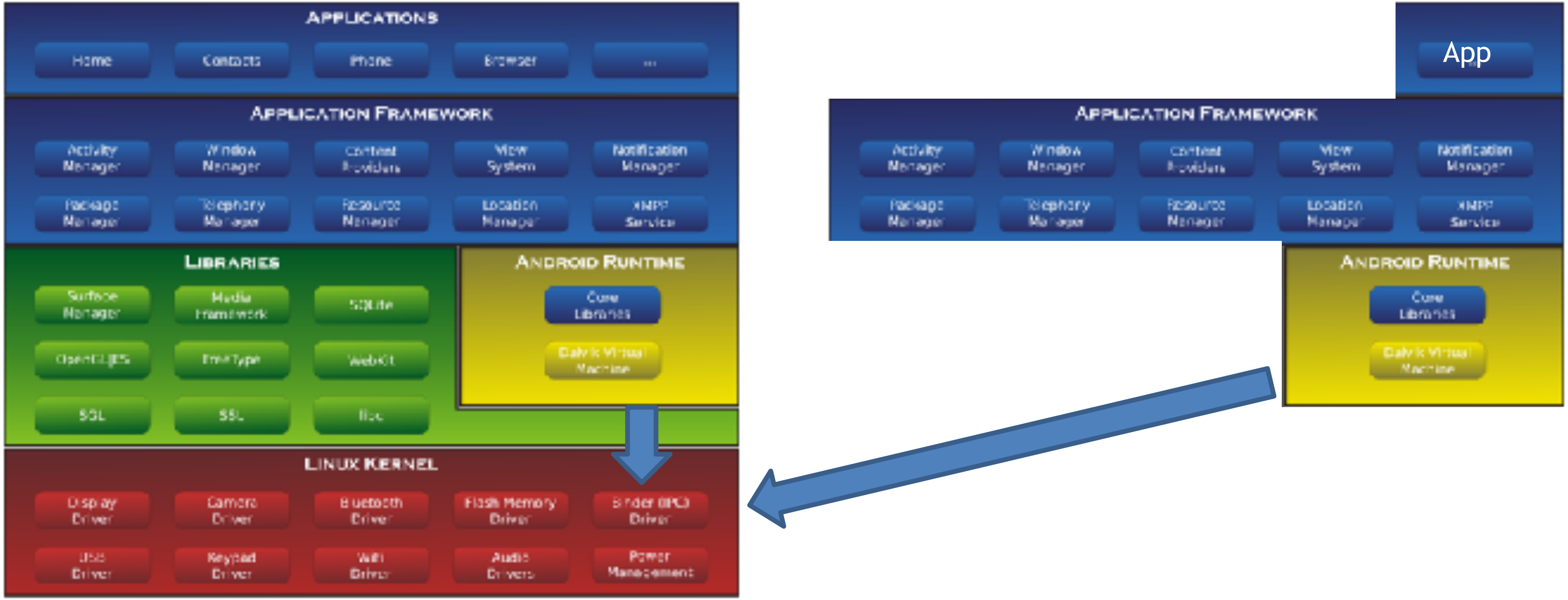

APPLICATIONS
Home
Contacts
Phone
Browser
...
APPLICATION FRAMEWORK
Activity Manager
Window Manager
Content Providers
View System
Notification Manager
Package Manager
Telephony Manager
Resource Manager
Location Manager
XMPP Service
LIBRARIES
Surface Manager
Media Framework
SQLite
OpenGL|ES
FreeType
WebKit
SGL
SSL
libc
ANDROID RUNTIME
Core Libraries
Dalvik Virtual Machine
LINUX KERNEL
Display Driver
Camera Driver
Bluetooth Driver
Flash Memory Driver
Binder (IPC) Driver
USB Driver
Keypad Driver
WiFi Driver
Audio Drivers
Power Management
App
APPLICATION FRAMEWORK
ANDROID RUNTIME

Discussion?

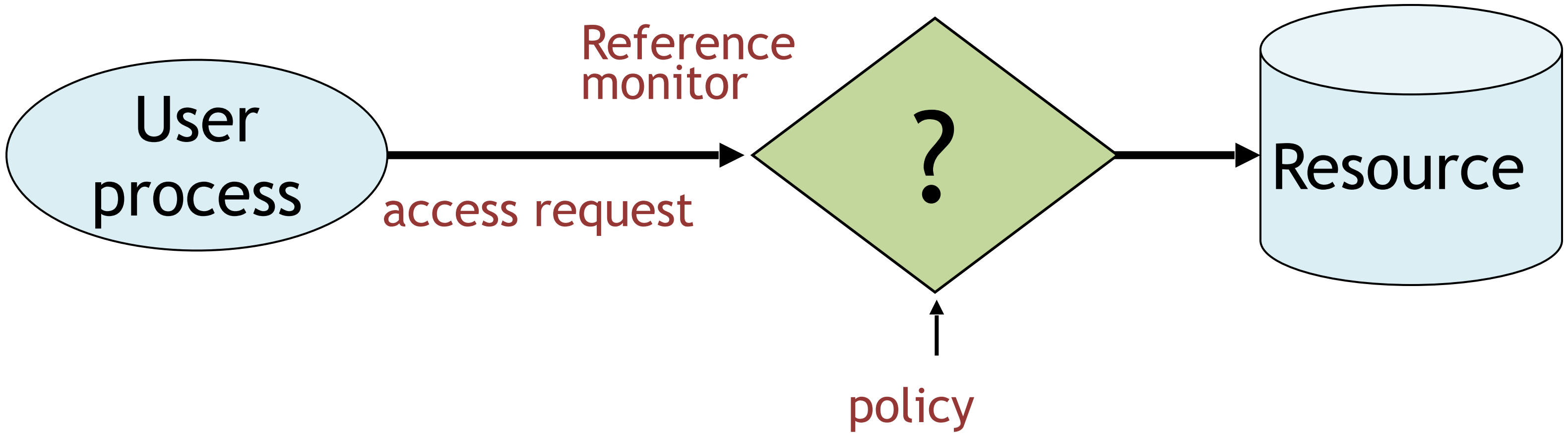
- Principle of Least Privilege
- Qmail example
- Android app sandbox example

Secure Architecture Principles

Access Control Concepts

Access control

- Assumptions
  - System knows who the user is
    - Authentication via name and password, other credential
  - Access requests pass through gatekeeper (reference monitor)
    - System must not allow monitor to be bypassed



Access control matrix [Lampson]

Objects

Subjects

	File 1	File 2	File 3	…	File n
User 1	read	write	-	-	read
User 2	write	write	write	-	-
User 3	-	-	-	read	read
…					
User m	read	write	read	write	read

Implementation concepts

- Access control list (ACL)
  - Store column of matrix with the resource
- Capability
  - User holds a “ticket” for each resource
  - Two variations
    - store row of matrix with user, under OS control
    - unforgeable ticket in user space

	File 1	File 2	…
User 1	read	write	-
User 2	write	write	-
User 3	-	-	read
…			
User m	Read	write	write

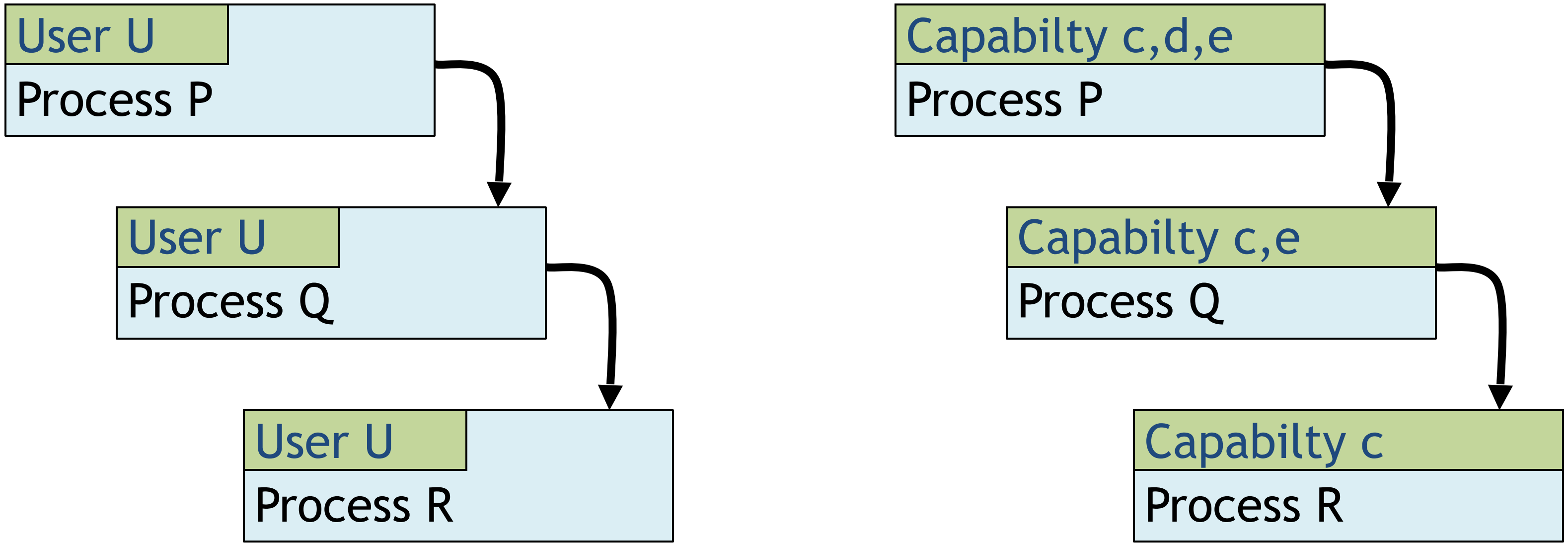
Access control lists are widely used, often with groups

Some aspects of capability concept are used in many systems

ACL vs Capabilities

- Access control list
  - Associate list with each object
  - Check user/group against list
  - Relies on authentication: need to know user
- Capabilities
  - Capability is unforgeable ticket
    - Random bit sequence, or managed by OS
    - Can be passed from one process to another
  - Reference monitor checks ticket
    - Does not need to know identify of user/process

ACL vs Capabilities

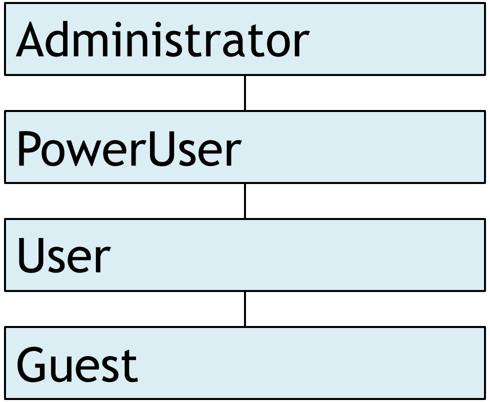


ACL vs Capabilities

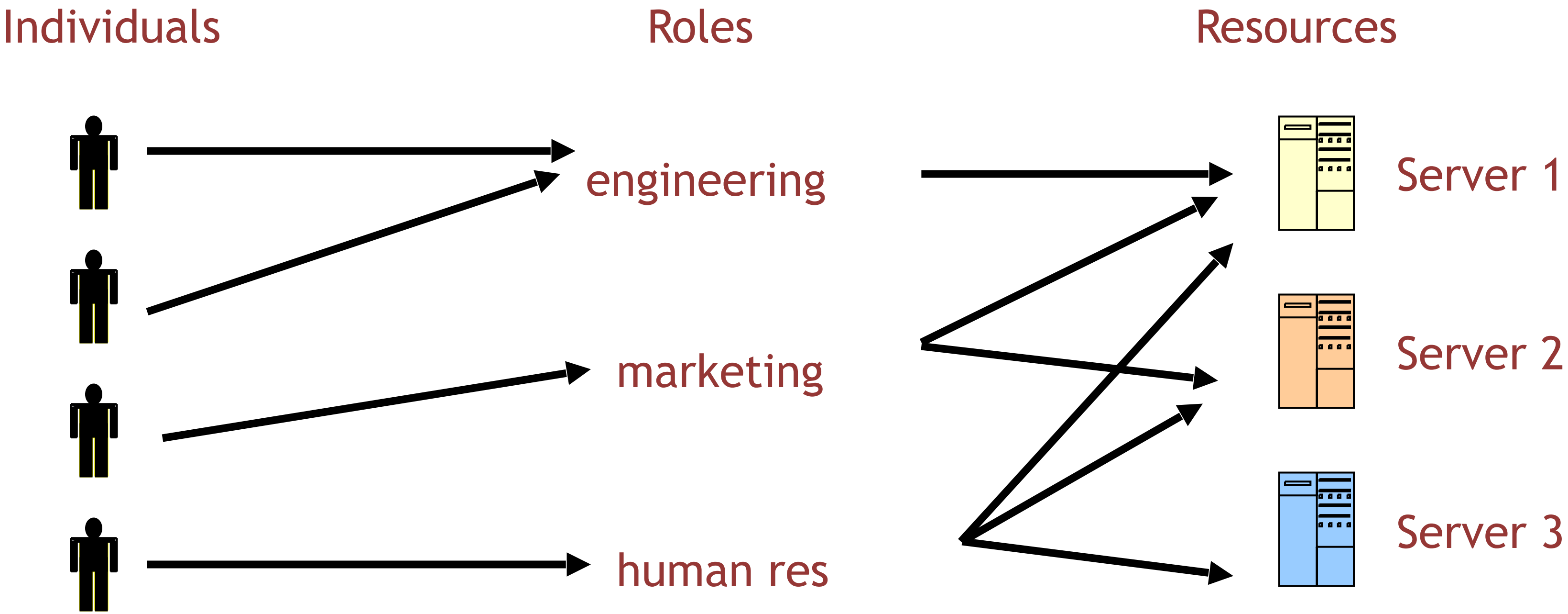
- Delegation
  - Cap: Process can pass capability at run time
  - ACL: Try to get owner to add permission to list?
    - More common: let other process act under current user
- Revocation
  - ACL: Remove user or group from list
  - Cap: Try to get capability back from process?
    - Possible in some systems if appropriate bookkeeping
      - OS knows which data is capability
      - If capability is used for multiple resources, have to revoke all or none …
    - Indirection: capability points to pointer to resource
      - If C $\rightarrow$ P $\rightarrow$ R, then revoke capability C by setting P=0

Roles (aka Groups)

- Role = set of users
  – Administrator, PowerUser, User, Guest
  – Assign permissions to roles; each user gets permission
- Role hierarchy
  – Partial order of roles
  – Each role gets permissions of roles below
  – List only new permissions given to each role



Role-Based Access Control



Advantage: users change more frequently than roles

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Access control summary

- Access control involves reference monitor
  - Check permissions: $\langle$user info, action$\rangle \rightarrow$ yes/no
  - Important: no way around this check
- Access control matrix
  - Access control lists vs capabilities
  - Advantages and disadvantages of each
- Role-based access control
  - Use group as “user info”; use group hierarchies

Discussion?

- Access control matrix
  - Access control list (ACL)
  - Capabilities
- Role-based access control

Secure Architecture Principles

Operating Systems

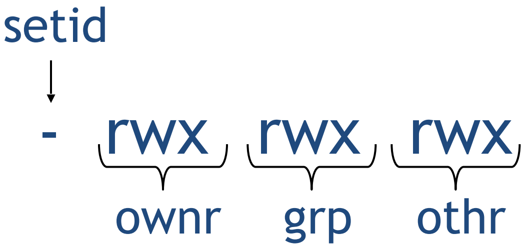
Unix access control

- Process has user id
  - Inherit from creating process
  - Process can change id
    - Restricted set of options
  - Special “root” id
    - All access allowed
- File has access control list (ACL)
  - Grants permission to user ids
  - Owner, group, other

	File 1	File 2	…
User 1	read	write	-
User 2	write	write	-
User 3	-	-	read
…			
User m	Read	write	write

Unix file access control list

- Each file has owner and group
- Permissions set by owner
  - Read, write, execute
  - Owner, group, other
  - Represented by vector of four octal values
- Only owner, root can change permissions
  - This privilege cannot be delegated or shared
- Setid bits – Discuss in a few slides



Process effective user id (EUID)

- Each process has three Ids (+ more under Linux)
  - Real user ID (RUID)
    - same as the user ID of parent (unless changed)
    - used to determine which user started the process
  - Effective user ID (EUID)
    - from set user ID bit on the file being executed, or sys call
    - determines the permissions for process
      - file access and port binding
  - Saved user ID (SUID)
    - So previous EUID can be restored

- Real group ID, effective group ID, used similarly

Process Operations and IDs

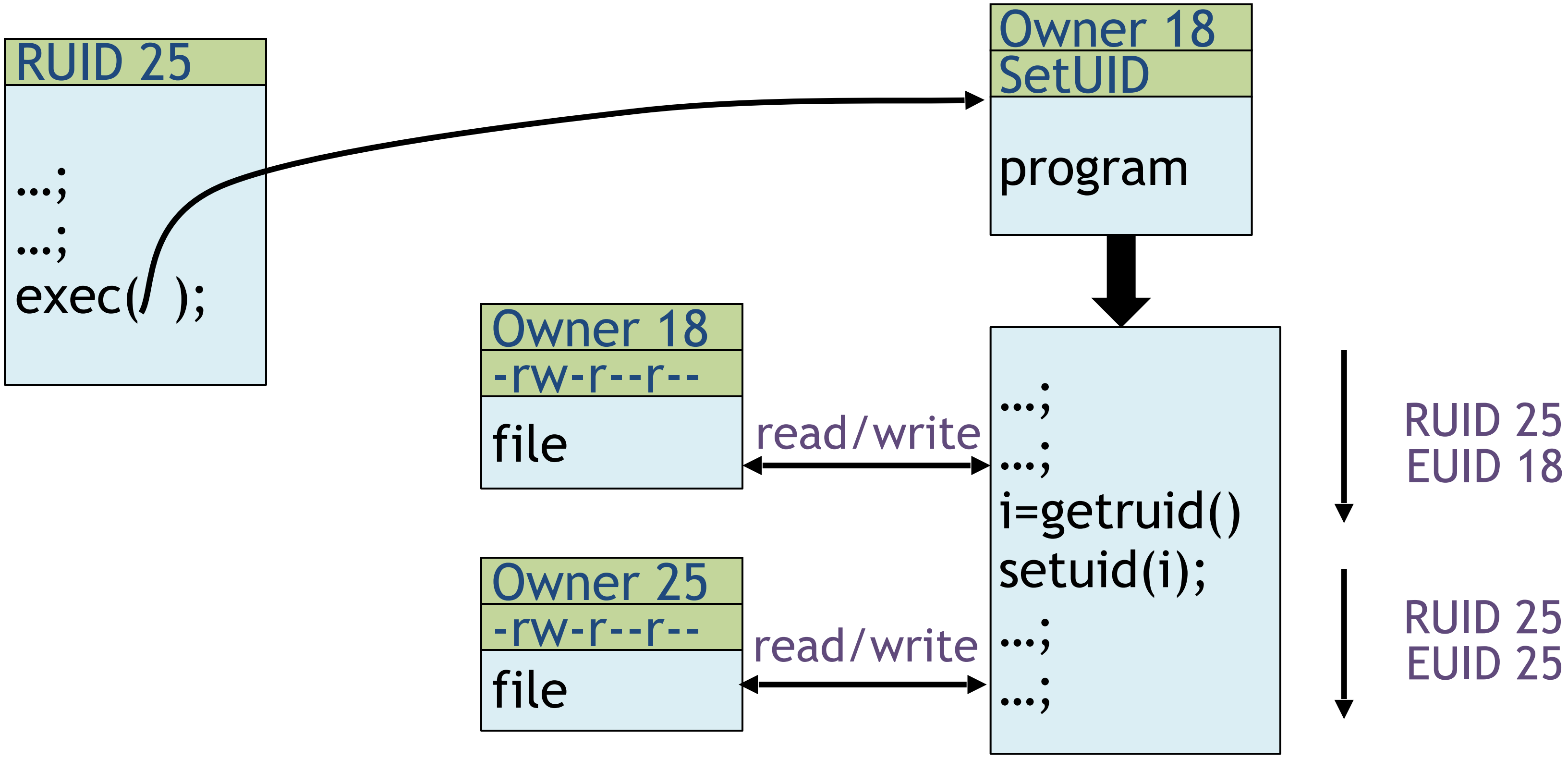
- Root
  - ID=0 for superuser root; can access any file
- Fork and Exec
  - Inherit three IDs, except exec of file with setuid bit
- Setuid system call
  - seteuid(newid) can set EUID to
    - Real ID or saved ID, regardless of current EUID
    - Any ID, if EUID=0

- Details are actually more complicated
  - Several different calls: setuid, seteuid, setreuid

Setid bits on executable Unix file

- Three setid bits
  - Setuid – set EUID of process to ID of file owner
  - Setgid – set EGID of process to GID of file
  - Sticky
    - Off: if user has write permission on directory, can rename or remove files, even if not owner
    - On: only file owner, directory owner, and root can rename or remove file in the directory

Example


RUID 25
…;
…;
exec( );
Owner 18
SetUID
program
Owner 18
-rw-r--r--
file
Owner 25
-rw-r--r--
file
read/write
read/write
…;
…;
i=getruid()
setuid(i);
…;
…;
RUID 25
EUID 18
RUID 25
EUID 25

Unix summary

- Good things
  - Some protection from most users
  - Flexible enough to make things possible
- Main limitation
  - Too tempting to use root privileges
  - No way to assume some root privileges without all root privileges

Weakness in isolation, privileges

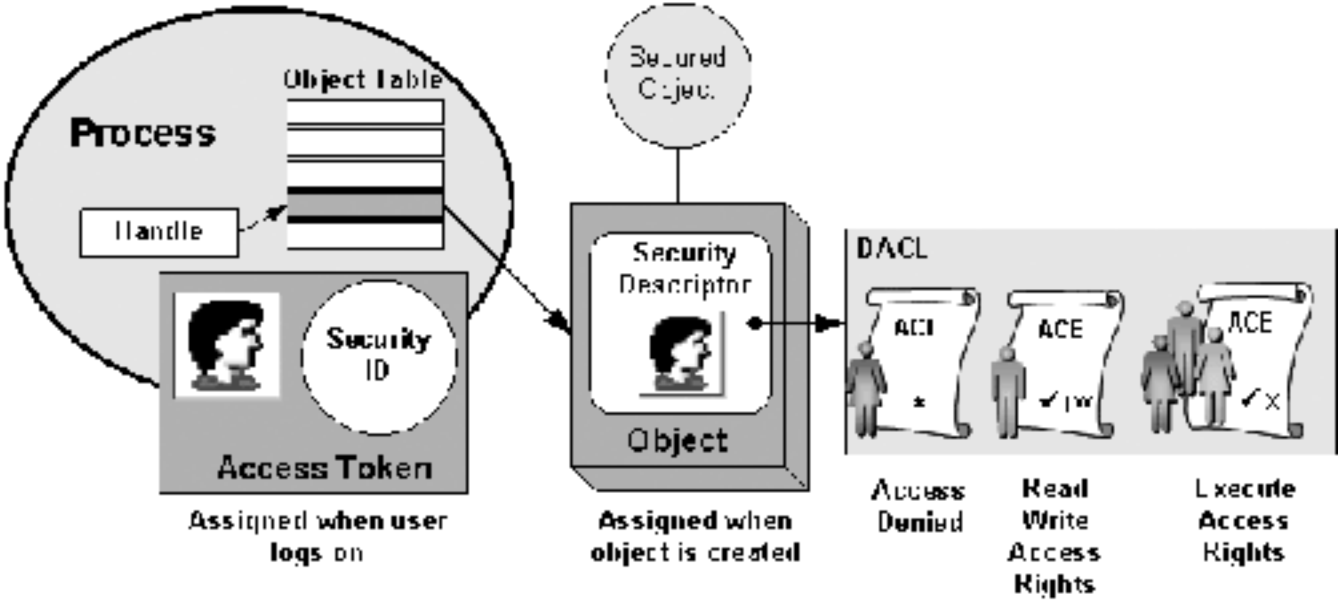
- Network-facing Daemons
  - Root processes with network ports open to all remote parties, e.g., sshd, ftpd, sendmail, …
- Rootkits
  - System extension via dynamically loaded kernel modules
- Environment Variables
  - System variables such as LIBPATH that are shared state across applications. An attacker can change LIBPATH to load an attacker-provided file as a dynamic library

Weakness in isolation, privileges

- Shared Resources
  - Since any process can create files in /tmp directory, an untrusted process may create files that are used by arbitrary system processes
- Time-of-Check-to-Time-of-Use (TOCTTOU)
  - Typically, a root process uses system call to determine if initiating user has permission to a particular file, e.g. /tmp/X.
  - After access is authorized and before the file open, user may change the file /tmp/X to a symbolic link to a target file /etc/shadow.

Access control in Windows

- Some basic functionality similar to Unix
  - Specify access for groups and users
    - Read, modify, change owner, delete
- Some additional concepts
  - Tokens
  - Security attributes
- Generally
  - More flexible than Unix
    - Can define new permissions
    - Can transfer some but not all privileges (*cf*. capabilities)


Process
Object Table
Handle
Security ID
Access Token
Secured Object
Security Descriptor
Object
DACL
ACE
ACE
ACE
Assigned when user logs on
Assigned when object is created
Access Denied
Read Write Access Rights
Execute Access Rights

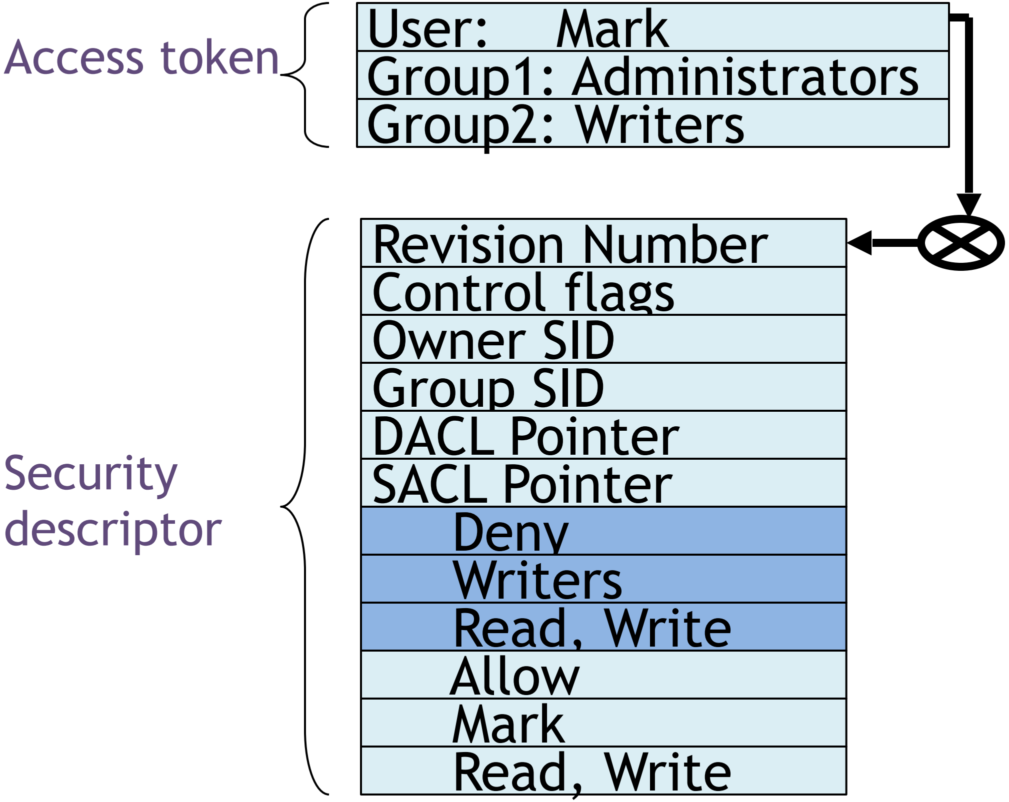
Process has set of tokens

- Security context
  - Privileges, accounts, and groups associated with the process or thread
  - Presented as set of tokens
- Impersonation token
  - Used temporarily to adopt a different security context, usually of another user

Object has security descriptor

- Specifies who can perform what actions on the object
  – Header (revision number, control flags, …)
  – SID of the object's owner
  – SID of the primary group of the object
  – Two attached optional lists:
    - Discretionary Access Control List (DACL) – users, groups, …
    - System Access Control List (SACL) – system logs, ..

Example access request



Access request: write
Action: denied

- User Mark requests write permission
- Descriptor denies permission to group
- Reference Monitor denies request

(DACL for access, SACL for audit and logging)

Priority:
Explicit Deny
Explicit Allow
Inherited Deny
Inherited Allow

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Impersonation Tokens (compare to setuid)

- Process adopts security attributes of another
  - Client passes impersonation token to server
- Client specifies impersonation level of server
  - Anonymous
    - Token has no information about the client
  - Identification
    - Obtain the SIDs of client and client's privileges, but server cannot impersonate the client
  - Impersonation
    - Impersonate the client on the local system
  - Delegation
    - Lets server impersonate client on local, remote systems

Weakness in isolation, privileges

- Similar problems to Unix
  - E.g., Rootkits leveraging dynamically loaded kernel modules
- Windows Registry
  - Global hierarchical database to store data for all programs
  - Registry entry can be associated with a security context that limits access; common to be able to write sensitive entry
- Enabled By Default
  - Historically, many Windows deployments also came with full permissions and functionality enabled

Secure Architecture Principles

Browser Isolation and Least Privilege

Web browser: an analogy

Operating system

- Subject: Processes
  - Has User ID (UID, SID)
  - Discretionary access control
- Objects
  - File
  - Network
  - …
- Vulnerabilities
  - Untrusted programs
  - Buffer overflow
  - …

Web browser

- Subject: web content (JavaScript)
  - Has "Origin"
  - Mandatory access control
- Objects
  - Document object model
  - Frames
  - Cookies / localStorage
- Vulnerabilities
  - Cross-site scripting
  - Implementation bugs
  - …

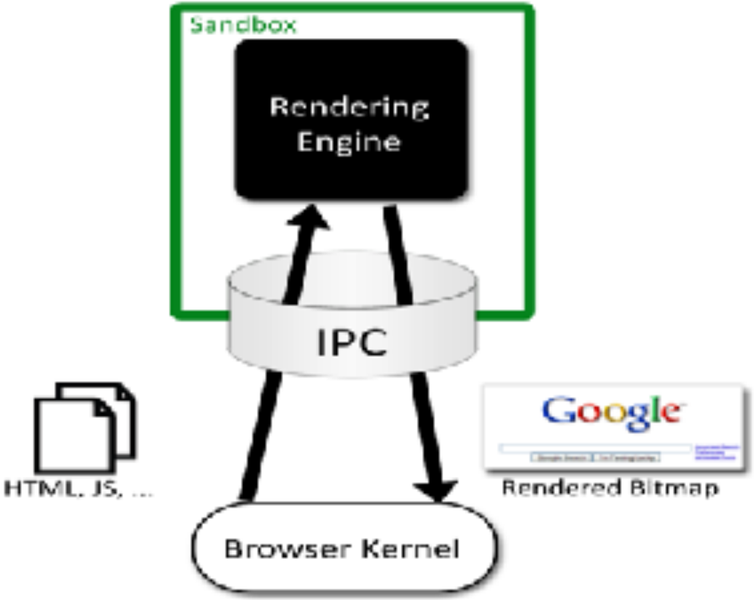
The web browser enforces its own internal policy. If the browser implementation is corrupted, this mechanism becomes unreliable.

Components of security policy

- Frame-Frame relationships
  - canScript(A,B)
    - Can Frame A execute a script that manipulates arbitrary/nontrivial DOM elements of Frame B?
  - canNavigate(A,B)
    - Can Frame A change the origin of content for Frame B?
- Frame-principal relationships
  - readCookie(A,S), writeCookie(A,S)
    - Can Frame A read/write cookies from site S?

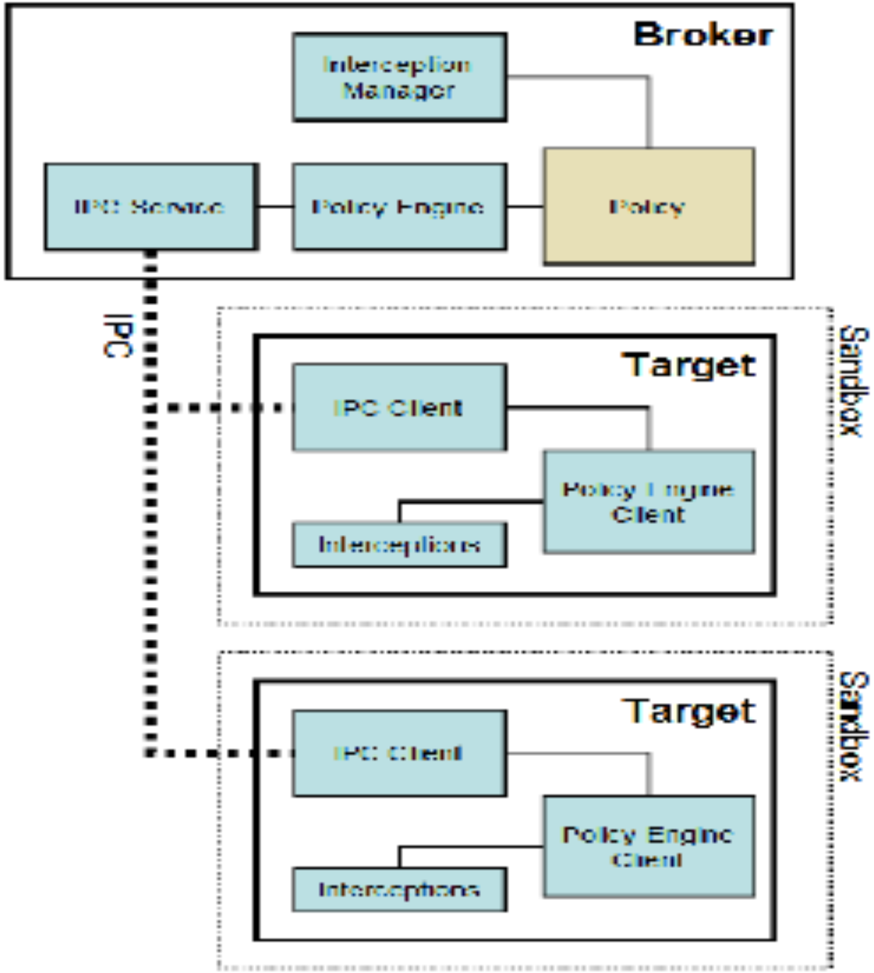
Chromium Security Architecture

- Browser ("kernel")
  - Full privileges (file system, networking)
- Rendering engine
  - Up to 20 processes
  - Sandboxed



Chromium

Communicating sandboxed components



See: http://dev.chromium.org/developers/design-documents/sandbox/

John Mitchell

Design Decisions

- Compatibility
  - Sites rely on the existing browser security policy
  - Browser is only as useful as the sites it can render
  - Rules out more “clean slate” approaches
- Black Box
  - Only renderer may parse HTML, JavaScript, etc.
  - Kernel enforces coarse-grained security policy
  - Renderer to enforces finer-grained policy decisions
- Minimize User Decisions

Task Allocation

Rendering Engine	Browser Kernel
HTML parsing	Cookie database
CSS parsing	History database
Image decoding	Password database
JavaScript interpreter	Window management
Regular expressions	Location bar
Layout	Safe Browsing blacklist
Document Object Model	Network stack
Rendering	SSL/TLS
SVG	Disk cache
XML parsing	Download manager
XSLT	Clipboard

Both
URL parsing
Unicode parsing

Summary

- Security principles
  - Isolation
  - Principle of Least Privilege
  - Qmail example
- Access Control Concepts
  - Matrix, ACL, Capabilities
- OS Mechanisms
  - Unix: UID, ACL, Setuid
  - Windows: SID, Tokens, Security Descriptor, Impersonation
- Browser security architecture
  - Isolation and least privilege example