

one aspect of
Security on JIT VMs
and more

Richie++ / richie / gera@corest.com



Security?

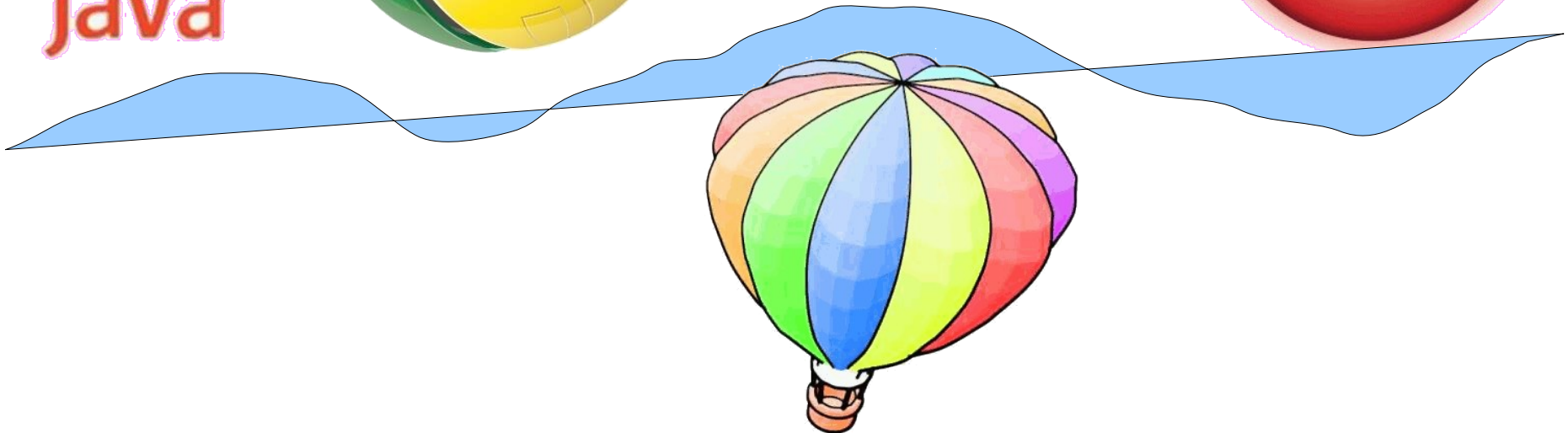


- Does your application need security?
- Do you do anything for its security?

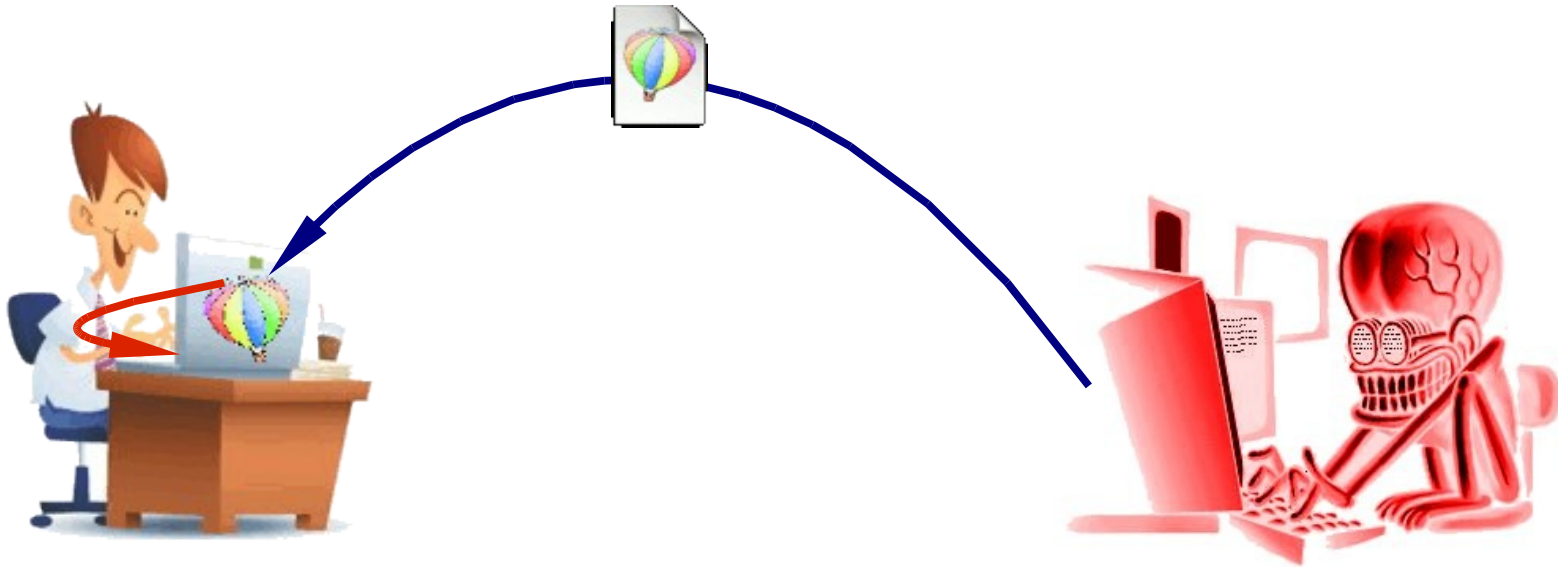
one aspect of
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.netTM



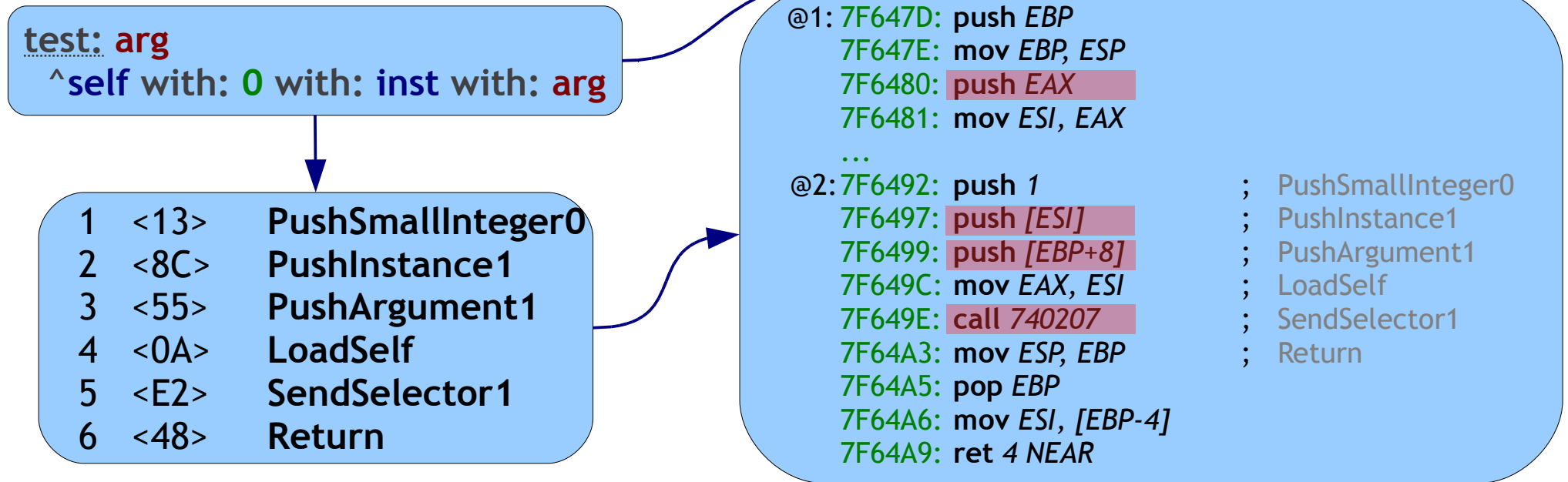
Scenario



- VM installed on user's machine (your application)
- Attacker provides content (**behavior**)
- Attacker escapes VM restrictions (if any)
- Attacker accesses private information

nativizing VMs

Digitalk VS



- Smalltalk stack == native stack
- Instance variables are accessed directly
- Contexts are stored in native stack

nativizing VMs Cincom VW

test: arg

^self with: 0 with: inst with: arg

```
1 <44> push self
2 <49> push 0
3 <10> push local 0
4 <00> push inst 0
5 <CE BE> send
6 <65> return
```

```
888AE6A: push EBP
888AE6B: mov EBP, ESP
888AE6D: sub ESP, 4
...
888AE7D: push EBX ; save receiver
888AE7E: push ESI ; save first arg
...
888AE87: push 3 ; push 0
888AE89: mov EDI, [EBP-10] ; push local 0
888AE8C: mov ESI, [EDX] ; push inst 0
888AE8E: mov EBX, [EBP-14] ; push self
888AE91: mov EDX, 9502FF0
888AE96: call 80A6570 ; send with:with:with
888AE9B: leave
888AE9C: ret
```

- Smalltalk stack \approx native stack
 - First arguments go in registers
- Instance variables are accessed “directly” (some)
- Contexts are stored in native stack

Disassembler

The screenshot shows a disassembler application window. The main window is titled "Integer" and has a menu bar with "File", "Edit", "Smalltalk", "PM Tools", "Class", "Variable", "Category", "Method", and "Options". The window is divided into several panes. On the left, a class hierarchy is shown with "Integer" selected. The top center pane shows "instance" and "class" radio buttons, with "instance" selected. Below this are two scrollable panes: "all variables" containing "self" and "all selectors" which is currently empty. On the right, a list of selectors is shown, with "asCharacter" selected. Below the panes are tabs for "Method source", "Class definition", "Comment", and "Hierarchy". The main area displays assembly code for the selected method:

```
754AF3: push 856BE8
754AF8: cmp ESP, [10028CD4]
754AFE: inc EBX
754AFF: jbe @5
754B01: inc EBX
@2: 754B02: push ESI ; 1 <0B> PushSelf
754B03: mov EAX, [1002EA28] ; 2 <5A> LoadAssoc1
754B08: call 754B40 ; 3 <CC> SendSpecial2 #value:
754B0D: mov ESP, EBP ; 4 <48> Return
754B0F: pop EBP
754B10: mov ESI, [EBP-4]
754B13: ret NEAR
```

A context menu is open on the right side of the window, listing various actions such as "Cut", "Copy", "Paste", "Do It", "Show It", "Inspect It", "Debug It", "Test method", "Validate method", "Browse in TargetProcess", "Browse It", "WindowBuilder", "Senders", "Implementors", "Local senders", "Local implementors", "Project senders", "Project implementors", "Matching selectors", "Find string", "Save", "Undo", "Format", "Show byte codes", and "Show assembler". The "Show assembler" option is currently selected and highlighted by the mouse cursor.

Condensing in assembly stack operations

PushR
PushSmallInteger 2048
PushLiteral1/Assoc1
PushInstance1
PushTemporary1
PushArgument1
PushContextTemporary1
PopR
DropTos1
StoreTemporary1
NoFrameProlog



```
7EAF A2: push EAX           ; PushR
7EAF A3: push 1001         ; PushSmallInteger 2048
7EAF A8: push 1100000C    ; PushLiteral1
7EAF AD: push [ESI]       ; PushInstance1
7EAF AF: push [EBP-C]     ; PushTemporary1
7EAF B2: push [EBP+4]     ; PushArgument1
7EAF B5: push [EDI+18]    ; PushContextTemporary1
7EAF B8: pop EAX          ; PopR
7EAF B9: add ESP, 4        ; DropTos1
7EAF BC: mov [EBP-C], EAX ; StoreTemporary1
7EAF BF: mov ESP, EBP     ; Return
```

- **Push**: add arbitrary things to the stack
- **StoreTemporary**: random access to negative offsets
- **PopR, DropTos**: arbitrarily move the stack pointer
- **NoFrameProlog**: skips saving/restoring the FP and SP



Escaping Digitalk VM

DropTosN 4
PushArgument1
Return

@1: 7CBC6D: push EBP
7CBC6E: mov EBP, ESP
7CBC70: push EAX
7CBC71: mov ESI, EAX
...
@2: 7CBC82: add ESP, 10 ; 1<05> DropTosN 4
7CBC85: push [EBP+4] ; 4<55> PushArgument1
7CBC88: mov ESP, EBP ; 5<48> Return
7CBC8A: pop EBP
7CBC8B: mov ESI, [EBP-4]
7CBC8E: ret NEAR

- Drop top of stack
- Overwrite return address with argument
- Return



Unbalancing the stack

selector: #test
arguments: 5

Return

```
@1: 7F2CDD: push EBP
     7F2CDE: mov EBP, ESP
     7F2CE0: push EAX
     7F2CE1: mov ESI, EAX
     7F2CE3: push 100BCF14
     7F2CE8: cmp ESP, [10028CD4]
     7F2CEE: inc EBX
     7F2CEF: jbe @5
     7F2CF1: inc EBX
@2: 7F2CF2: mov ESP, EBP           ; 1<48> Return
     7F2CF4: pop EBP
     7F2CF5: mov ESI, [EBP-4]
     7F2CF8: ret 14 NEAR
```

- Caller pushes no arguments
- Callee cleans 5 arguments, unbalances stack
- Caller can modify *protected* values (return address)



Escaping Cincom VM

selector: #test:
arguments: 8
frame size: 10

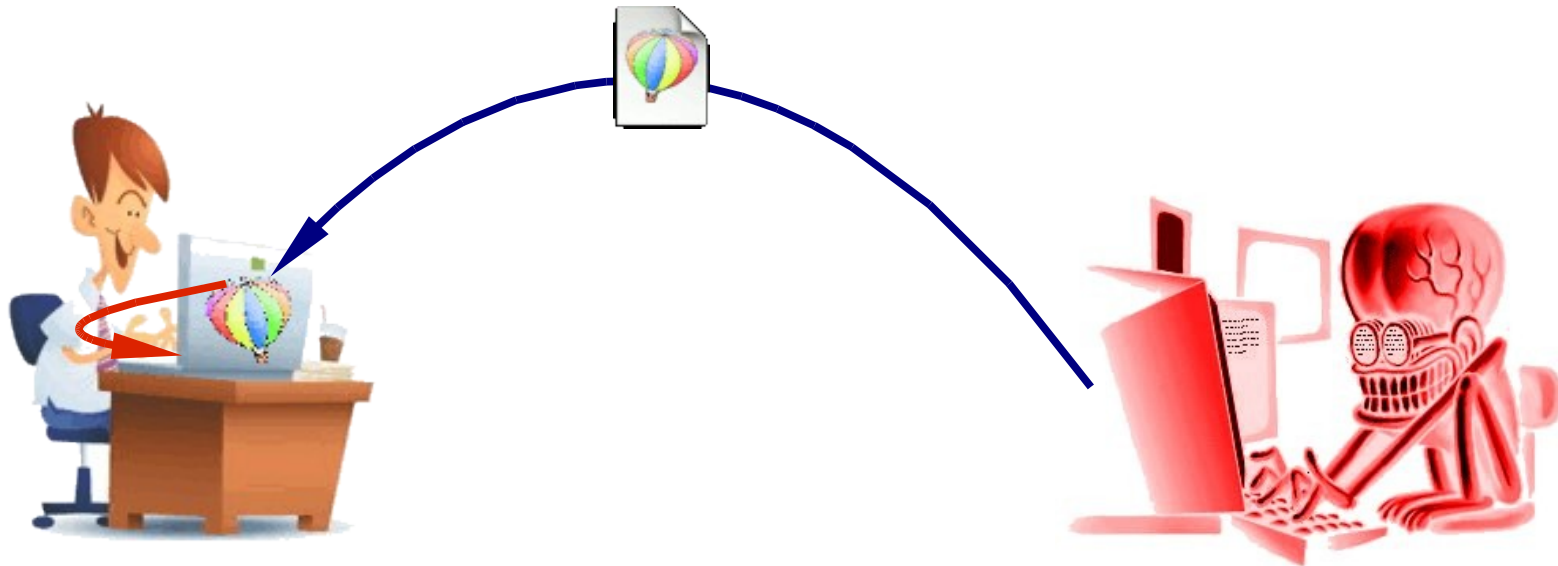
OpReturnReceiver

```
9C8EAE2: push EBP
9C8EAE3: mov EBP, ESP
9C8EAE5: sub ESP, 4
9C8EAE8: push 9C877B8
9C8EAE D: cmp ESP, [80DB614]
9C8EAF3: jc 9C8EAC4
9C8EAF5: push EBX
9C8EAF6: push ESI
9C8EAF7: push EDI
9C8EAF8: mov EBX, [EBP-C] ; OpReturnReceiver
9C8EAFB: leave
9C8EAF C: ret 1C NEAR
```

- Caller pushes 1 argument
- Callee cleans 7 arguments, unbalances stack
- Caller can modify *protected* values (return address)




Attack layout





- Attacker transfers a CompiledMethod and activates it
- Attacker escapes the VM, and accesses the OS
- OS does not provide Application storage isolation
- Attacker gets stored passwords and credit cards





Securing Smalltalk (some ideas)

 fileMeta := 0 class class class allInstances
detect: [:metaClass |
metaClass instanceClass name = 'File'].
fileMeta instanceClass openReadOnly: '..\savedPasswords'

• Reachability

 File pathNameReadOnly: 'temporaryFile.dat'
 File pathNameReadOnly: '..\savedPasswords'

• Sandboxing

 PushR, PushR, DropTos2, Return
 PushR, PushR, Return

• Verifier

• Are all three necessary?



Escaping Digitalk VM

SmallInteger >> #readMemory
LoadInstance1
Return

@2: 796DA2: mov EAX, [ESI] ; 1 <7F> LoadInstance1
796DA4: mov ESP, EBP ; 2 <48> Return
796DA6: pop EBP
796DA7: mov ESI, [EBP-4]
796DAA: ret 4 NEAR

SmallInteger >> #writeMemory:
LoadArgument1
StoreInstance1
Return

@2: 7FCA82: mov EAX, [EBP+8] ; 1 <50> LoadArgument1
7FCA85: mov [ESI], EAX ; 2 <96> StoreInstance1
7FCA87: call 1001AEAO
7FCA8C: mov ESP, EBP ; 3 <48> Return
7FCA8E: pop EBP
7FCA8F: mov ESI, [EBP-4]
7FCA92: ret 4 NEAR

- Arbitrary memory read
- Arbitrary memory write



Escaping Cincom VM

SmallInteger >> #readMemory
OpLoadInst
OpReturn

8EA1F09:mov EDX, [ESI] ; OpStorePopInst
8EA1F0B:mov EBX, [EDX]
...
8EA1F20:leave ; OpReturn
8EA1F21:ret NEAR

SmallInteger >> #writeMemory:
OpLoadTemp
OpStorePopInst
OpReturn

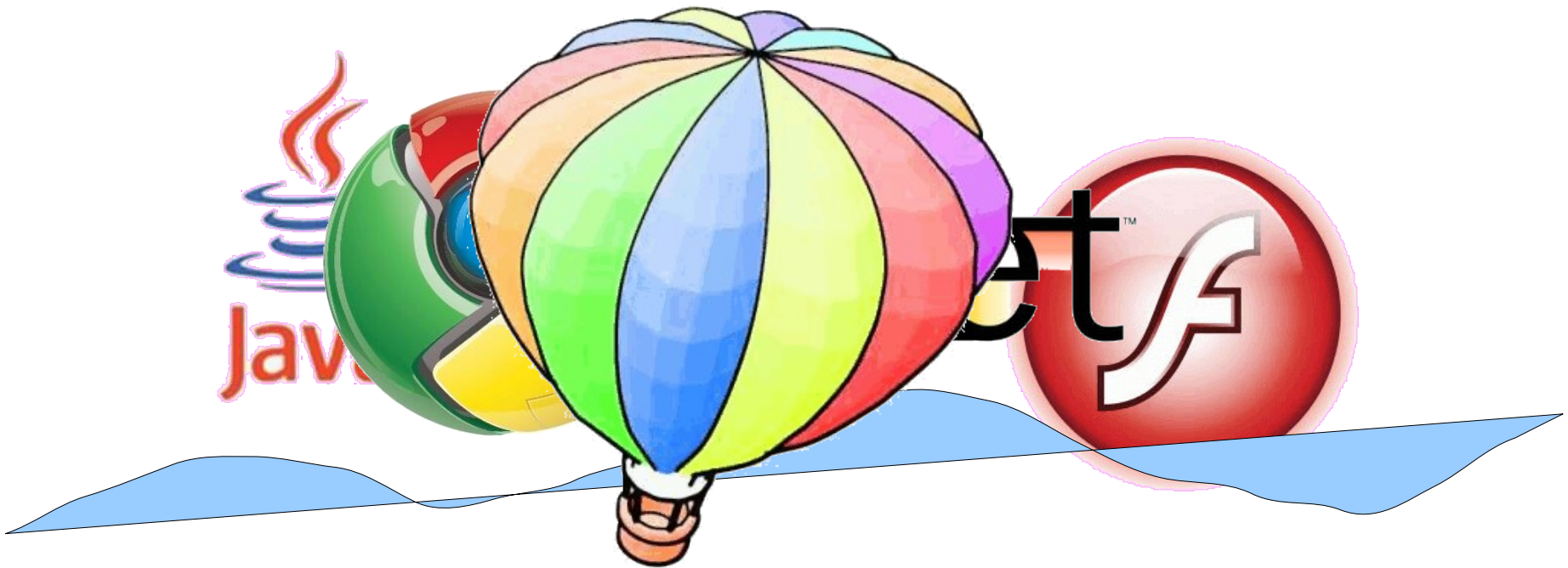
8EA1F09:mov EDX, [ESI] ; OpStorePopInst
8EA1F0B:mov [EDX], EBX
...
8EA1F20:leave ; OpReturn
8EA1F21:ret 4 NEAR

- Arbitrary memory read
(#[0 0 0 16r78 16r56 16r34 16r12] copyToHeap asInteger / 4) readMemory
- Arbitrary memory write



```
[Audience hasQuestions] whileTrue: [  
  self answer: Audience nextQuestion]
```


Further understanding better assessment



PushArgument2



Documenting Bytecodes

BytecodeNativizerPushR
assembler pushR

Assembler >> #pushR
self assembleByte: 16r50 " push eax "

BytecodeNativizerDropTos1
assembler dropTos: 1

BytecodeNativizerDropTosN
| idx |
idx := self nextIndex.
assembler dropTos: idx

Assembler >> #dropTos: **index**
self " sub esp, index * 4 "
assemble: #[16r83 16rC4];
assembleByte: **index** * 4

BytecodeNativizerLoadInstN
assembler loadFromInstance:
self nextIndex

Assembler >> #loadFromInstance: **index**
" We need mov eax, [esi + index*4] "
self assembleByte: 16r8B.
index = 1 ifTrue: [^self reg: 0 mod: 0 rm: 6].
index abs > 31
ifTrue: [
self reg: 0 mod: 2 rm: 6.
self assembleLong: **index** - 1 * 4]
ifFalse: [...]



Testing Bytecodes

Templates

loadInstance1

```
"  
1 <7F> LoadInstance1  
2 <48> Return  
"  
| a |  
^testSelector
```

loadInstanceNoProlog1

```
"  
1 <02> NoFrameProlog  
2 <7F> LoadInstance1  
3 <48> Return  
"  
^testSelector
```

Test

testSameAsOriginal: cm

```
| original documentation |  
original := CompiledMethodNativizer  
originalNativize: cm.  
documentation := CompiledMethodNativizer  
nativize: cm.  
self assert: original == documentation
```

shortForwardTestJumpFalse

```
"  
1 <0E> LoadTrue  
2 <1B> TestJumpFalse 6  
5 <14> LoadSmallInteger1  
6 <49> ReturnSelf  
"  
true ifTrue: [1].
```



So far so good... but does the generated code work?

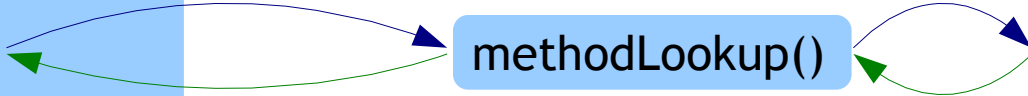


Two worlds unite

PushSmallInteger 1234
PushArgument1
LoadSelf
SendSelector1
Return

methodLookup()

rtCompile()





Two worlds unite

```
PushSmallInteger 1234  
PushArgument1  
LoadSelf  
SendSelector1  
Return
```

methodLookup()

rtCompile()

rtCompile: aCompiledMethod

Transcript

show: 'got callback ';

Show: aCompiledMethod printString; cr

cr.

aCompiledMethod selector = #testMethod ifTrue: [
^self nativize: aCompiledMethod].

^0



What's next?



- Debugging JIT
- Frozen code
- All in Smalltalk



```
[Audience hasQuestions] whileTrue: [  
    self answer: Audience nextQuestion].
```

```
Audience do: [:you | self thank: you].
```

```
self returnTo: Audience
```


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1

- We understand why it's important that all this VMs have security: We use most of them every day in some way or another, and through them we extend our trust to untrusted mobile code applications from we download from unknown sources.
- They have all gone, directly or indirectly, through some security audits and, one way or another, their developers today care about security issues.
- Smalltalk has grown as the very open "socialist" environment we all love, were we just trust everybody. The VMs developers community has not really payed much attention to security (not at least from a mobile code perspective)
- Time has come for mobile code to also reach Smalltalk (browser plugins, Croquet objects with their own behavior, Scratch/EToys projects, seaside hosting)

Security?

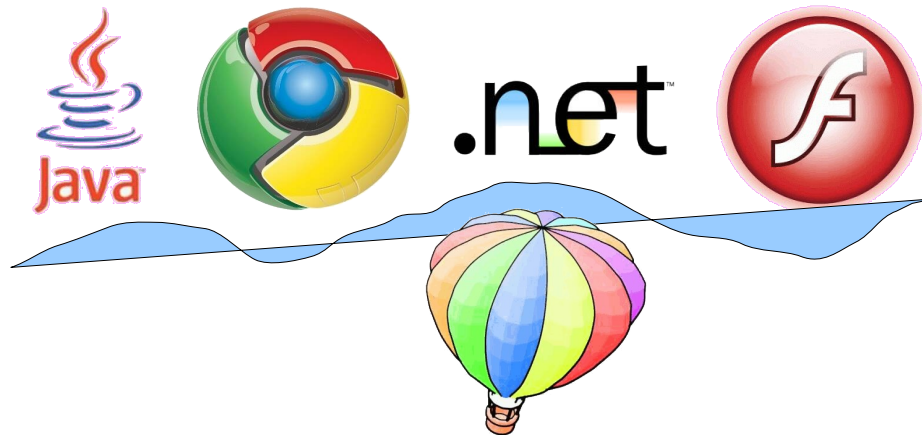


- Does your application need security?
- Do you do anything for its security?

2

- Any application installed on a computer can open the door to an attacker, in our scenario we are assuming mobile code (maybe embedded in other type of content)
- The VM is supposed to provide some sandboxing, if the sandboxing can be broken the trust chain can be abused:
 - the user trusts the VM
 - the VM trusts/verifies the mobile code
 - the mobile code fools the VM

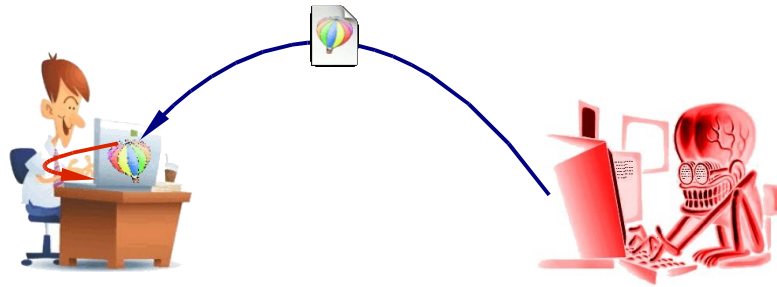
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3

- We understand why it's important that all this VMs have security: We use most of them every day in some way or another, and through them we extend our trust to untrusted mobile code applications from we download from unknown sources.
- They have all gone, directly or indirectly, through some security audits and, one way or another, their developers today care about security issues.
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- Time has come for mobile code to also reach Smalltalk (browser plugins, Croquet objects with their own behavior, Scratch/EToys projects, seaside hosting)

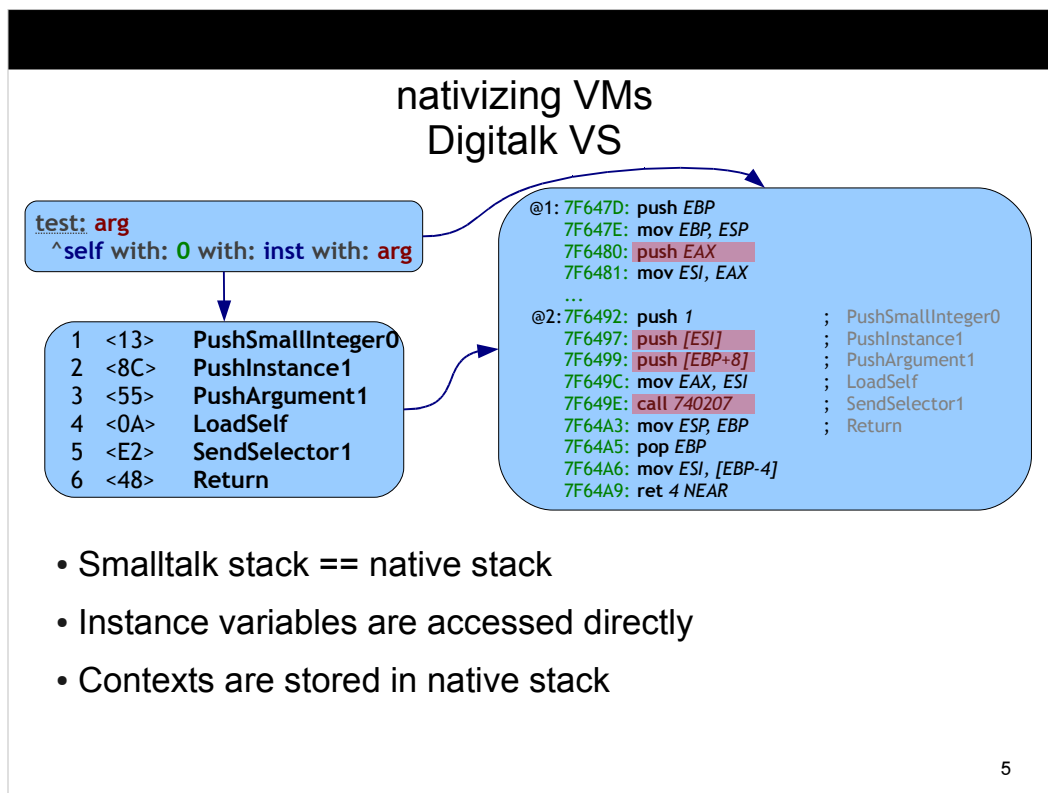
Scenario



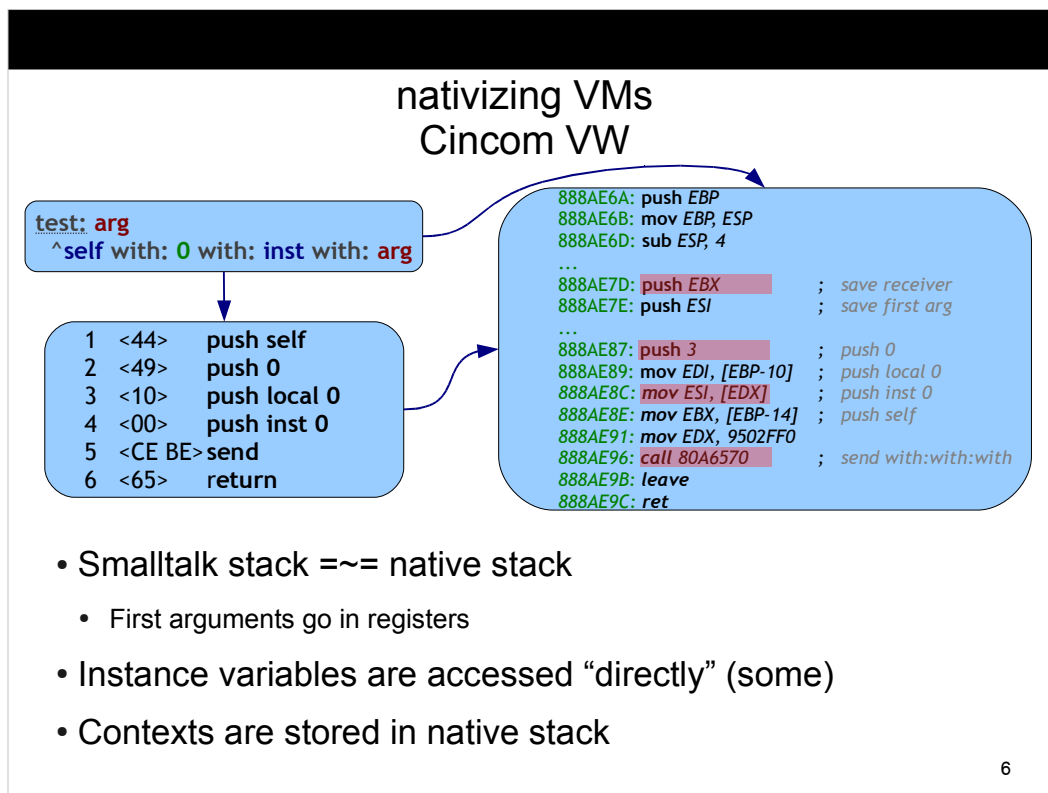
- VM installed on user's machine (your application)
- Attacker provides content (**behavior**)
- Attacker escapes VM restrictions (if any)
- Attacker accesses private information

4

- Any application installed on a computer can open the door to an attacker, in our scenario we are assuming mobile code (maybe embedded in other type of content)
- The VM is supposed to provide some sandboxing, if the sandboxing can be broken the trust chain can be abused:
 - the user trusts the VM
 - the VM trusts/verifies the mobile code
 - the mobile code fools the VM



- Smalltalk is compiled to Bytecode
- Bytecode is nativized
- Smalltalk is directly compiled to Assembly
- Here we can see
 - Smalltalk stack is kept in the native stack (push nativized to push)
 - Contexts are normal native stack frames
 - return addresses managed through native call/ret
 - Arguments are accessed through the native frame pointer
 - Local variables are accessed through the native frame pointer
 - The receiver is saved in a local
 - Instance variables are accessed with direct memory accesses without any checks
- If we could arbitrarily access any indexed argument we could corrupt the return address or saved receiver (from other frames)



- Here we can see
 - Smalltalk stack is kept in the native stack (push nativized to push)
 - Contexts are normal native stack frames
 - return addresses managed through native call/ret
 - after 3 args they accessed through the native frame pointer
 - Local variables are accessed through the native frame pointer
 - The receiver is saved in a local
 - Some instance variables are accessed with direct memory accesses without any checks, some are accessed through a routing that MAY do checks.
- If we could arbitrarily write any indexed argument we could corrupt the return address, saved receiver or locals (from other frames)
- If we could arbitrarily manipulate any indexed instance variable we could corrupt the object space

Disassembler

The screenshot shows a disassembler application window titled "Disassembler". The interface includes a menu bar with "File", "Edit", "Smalltalk", "PM Tools", "Class", "Variable", "Category", "Method", and "Options". Below the menu bar, there are three panes: a class hierarchy tree on the left, a central pane for variables and selectors, and a right-hand pane for method actions. The class hierarchy tree shows "Integer" selected under "Number". The central pane shows "self" under "--- all variables ---". The right-hand pane shows a list of actions, with "Show assembler" highlighted. The main assembly window displays the following code:

```
754AF3: push 856BE8
754AF8: cmp ESP, [10028CD4]
754AFE: inc EBX
754AFF: jbe @5
754B01: inc EBX
@2: 754B02: push ESI ; 1 <0B> PushSelf
754B03: mov EAX, [1002EA28] ; 2 <5A> LoadAssoc1
754B08: call 754B40 ; 3 <CC> SendSpecial2 #value:
754B0D: mov ESP, EBP ; 4 <48> Return
754B0F: pop EBP
754B10: mov ESI, [EBP-4]
754B13: ret NEAR
```

The status bar at the bottom shows "[Complexity 1. Incursion 1]" and "[unclassified] - 0".

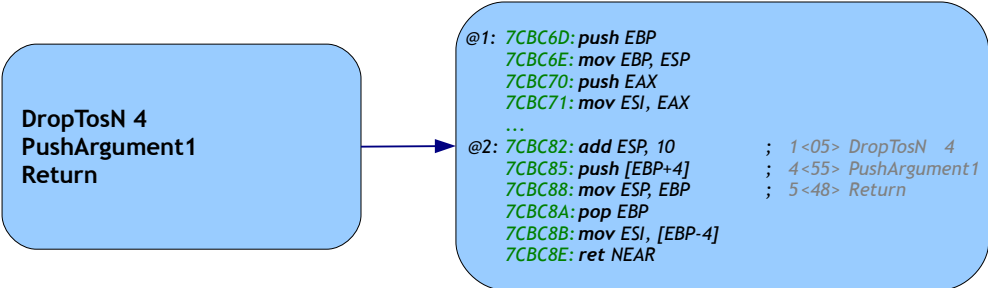
Condensing in assembly stack operations

PushR
PushSmallInteger 2048
PushLiteral1/Assoc1
PushInstance1
PushTemporary1
PushArgument1
PushContextTemporary1
PopR
DropTos1
StoreTemporary1
NoFrameProlog

```
7EAF A2: push EAX           ; PushR
7EAF A3: push 1001          ; PushSmallInteger 2048
7EAF A8: push 1100000C       ; PushLiteral1
7EAF AD: push [ESI]       ; PushInstance1
7EAF AF: push [EBP-C]     ; PushTemporary1
7EAF B2: push [EBP+4]     ; PushArgument1
7EAF B5: push [EDI+18]    ; PushContextTemporary1
7EAF B8: pop EAX          ; PopR
7EAF B9: add ESP, 4        ; DropTos1
7EAF BC: mov [EBP-C], EAX ; StoreTemporary1
7EAF BF: mov ESP, EBP     ; Return
```

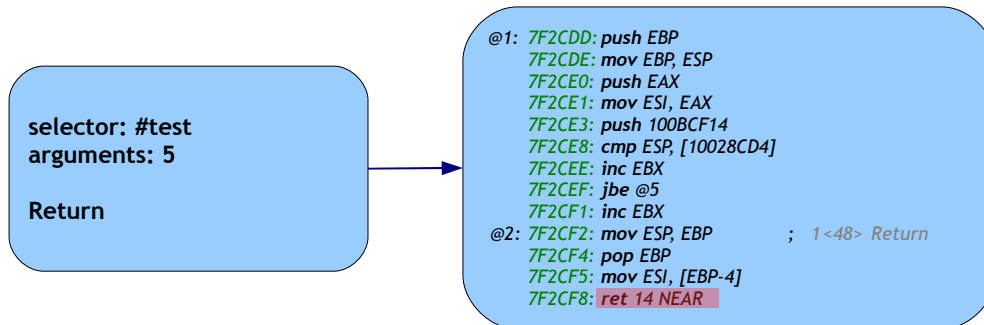
- **Push**: add arbitrary things to the stack
- **StoreTemporary**: random access to negative offsets
- **PopR, DropTos**: arbitrarily move the stack pointer
- **NoFrameProlog**: skips saving/restoring the FP and SP

Escaping Digitalk VM



- Drop top of stack
- Overwrite return address with argument
- Return

Unbalancing the stack



- Caller pushes no arguments
- Callee cleans 5 arguments, unbalances stack
- Caller can modify *protected* values (return address)

Escaping Cincom VM



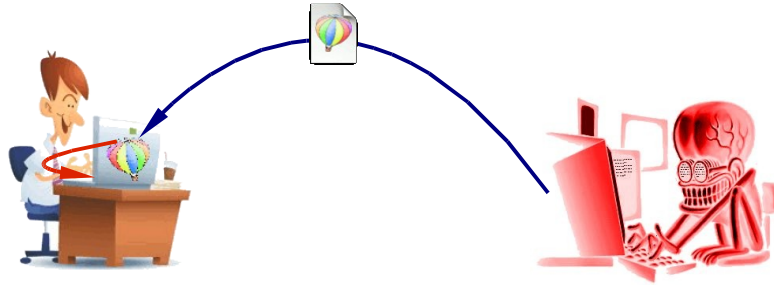
selector: #test:
arguments: 8
frame size: 10

OpReturnReceiver

```
9C8EAE2: push EBP
9C8EAE3: mov EBP, ESP
9C8EAE5: sub ESP, 4
9C8EAE8: push 9C877B8
9C8EAE9: cmp ESP, [80DB614]
9C8EAF3: jc 9C8EAC4
9C8EAF5: push EBX
9C8EAF6: push ESI
9C8EAF7: push EDI
9C8EAF8: mov EBX, [EBP-C] ; OpReturnReceiver
9C8EAFB: leave
9C8EAFc: ret 1C NEAR
```

- Caller pushes 1 argument
- Callee cleans 7 arguments, unbalances stack
- Caller can modify *protected* values (return address)






Attack layout



- Attacker transfers a CompiledMethod and activates it
- Attacker escapes the VM, and accesses the OS
- OS does not provide Application storage isolation
- Attacker gets stored passwords and credit cards



Securing Smalltalk (some ideas)

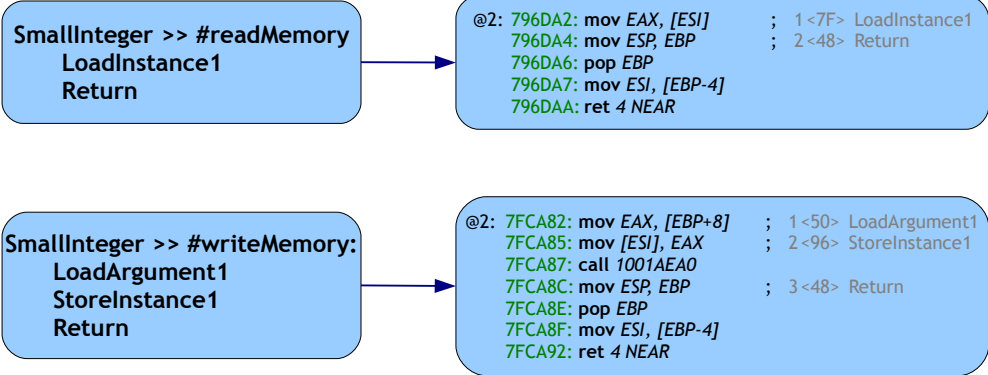
 <code>fileMeta := 0 class class class allInstances detect: [:metaClass metaClass instanceClass name = 'File']. fileMeta instanceClass openReadOnly: '...\savedPasswords'</code>	• Reachability
 <code>File pathNameReadOnly: 'temporaryFile.dat'</code>	• Sandboxing
 <code>File pathNameReadOnly: '...\savedPasswords'</code>	
 <code>PushR, PushR, DropTos2, Return</code>	• Verifier
 <code>PushR, PushR, Return</code>	

• Are all three necessary?

13

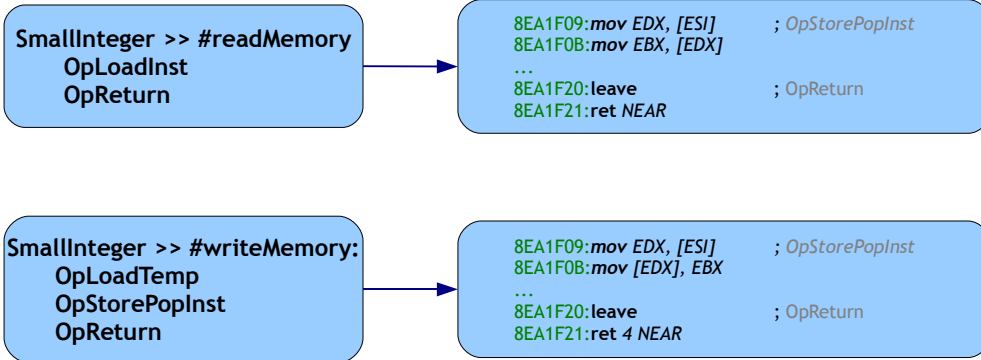
- In a fully dynamic and reflective system reachability is hard to constrain
- Sandboxing, ACL or permissions must be implemented in the VM itself. They could be bypassed, most likely, if implemented in the image.
- A bytecode verifier is mandatory in any kind of nativizing VM, and strict checks are also required in an interpreter.

Escaping Digitalk VM



- Arbitrary memory read
- Arbitrary memory write

Escaping Cincom VM

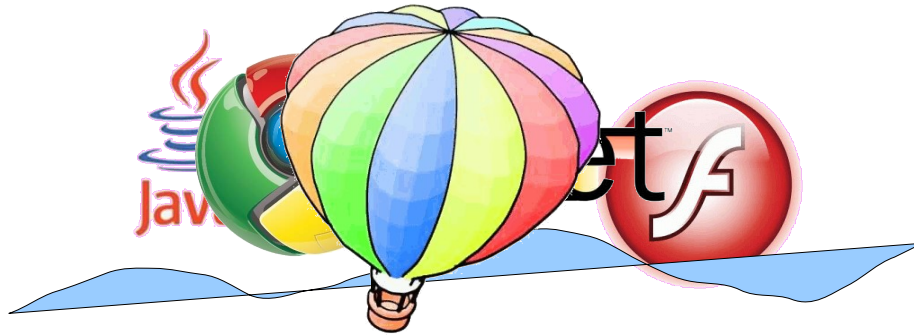


- Arbitrary memory read
(#[0 0 0 16r78 16r56 16r34 16r12] copyToHeap asInteger / 4) readMemory
- Arbitrary memory write



```
[Audience hasQuestions] whileTrue: [  
  self answer: Audience nextQuestion]
```


Further understanding better assessment



PushArgument2

17

- Just randomly looking how each bytecode is nativized is not enough to assess the security of the system, we need to understand all possible variations for each bytecode.
- So we need to understand and document the workings of the JIT nativizer, and what better documentation than something which can be debugged. So, as we all learned long time ago with the original specification of the Smalltalk VM, we started documenting not in .doc, but in .st

Documenting Bytecodes



BytecodeNativizerPushR
assembler pushR

Assembler >> #pushR
self assembleByte: 16r50 " push eax "

BytecodeNativizerDropTos1
assembler dropTos: 1

BytecodeNativizerDropTosN
| idx |
idx := self nextIndex.
assembler dropTos: idx

Assembler >> #dropTos: **index**
self " sub esp, index * 4 "
assemble: #[16r83 16rC4];
assembleByte: **index** * 4

BytecodeNativizerLoadInstN
assembler loadFromInstance:
self nextIndex

Assembler >> #loadFromInstance: **index**
" We need mov eax, [esi + index*4] "
self assembleByte: 16r8B.
index = 1 ifTrue: [^self reg: 0 mod: 0 rm: 6].
index abs > 31
ifTrue: [
self reg: 0 mod: 2 rm: 6.
self assembleLong: **index** - 1 * 4]
ifFalse: [...]



Testing Bytecodes

Templates

loadInstance1

```
"  
1 <7F> LoadInstance1  
2 <48> Return  
"  
| a |  
^testSelector
```

loadInstanceNoProlog1

```
"  
1 <02> NoFrameProlog  
2 <7F> LoadInstance1  
3 <48> Return  
"  
^testSelector
```

Test

```
testSameAsOriginal: cm  
| original documentation |  
original := CompiledMethodNativizer  
originalNativize: cm.  
documentation := CompiledMethodNativizer  
nativize: cm.  
self assert: original == documentation
```

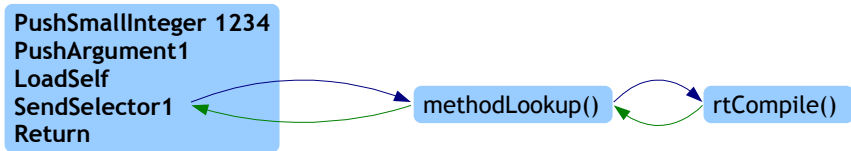
shortForwardTestJumpFalse

```
"  
1 <0E> LoadTrue  
2 <1B> TestJumpFalse 6  
5 <14> LoadSmallInteger1  
6 <49> ReturnSelf  
"  
true ifTrue: [1].
```



So far so good... but does the generated code work?

Two worlds unite



Two worlds unite



```
PushSmallInteger 1234
PushArgument1
LoadSelf
SendSelector1
Return
```

methodLookup()

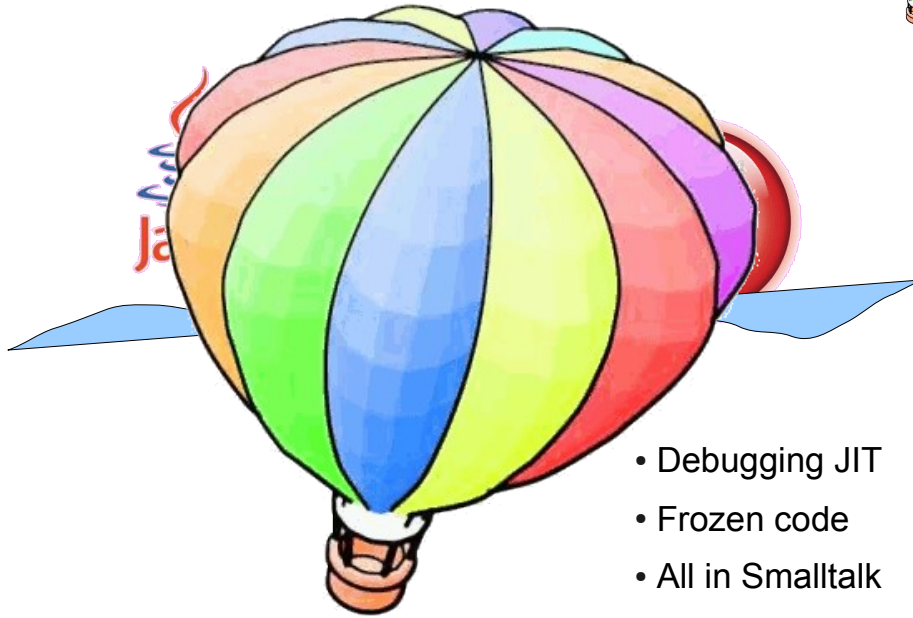
rtCompile()

```
rtCompile: aCompiledMethod
Transcript
show: 'got callback ';
Show: aCompiledMethod printString; cr
cr.

aCompiledMethod selector = #testMethod ifTrue: [
^self nativize: aCompiledMethod].

^0
```

What's next?



- Debugging JIT
- Frozen code
- All in Smalltalk



```
[Audience hasQuestions] whileTrue: [  
    self answer: Audience nextQuestion].
```

```
Audience do: [:you | self thank: you].
```

```
self returnTo: Audience
```