

# *Executable Formats*

ELF, PE, MACHO

# In this class

- Brief overview of what executable formats do. (15 minutes)
- We will break down the ELF file format. (1 hour)
- Students will implement a program to parse ELF files. (1 hour)
- Bonus Points: Students can programmatically rearrange, change, or resize portions of an ELF file on disk while maintaining runtime behavior.

# If you're going for Bonus Points

You may want to write code as we go.

I have conveniently placed `/usr/include/elf.h` on everyone's linux machines. This file includes all of the `structs` and `defines` we will cover.

# Executable Formats

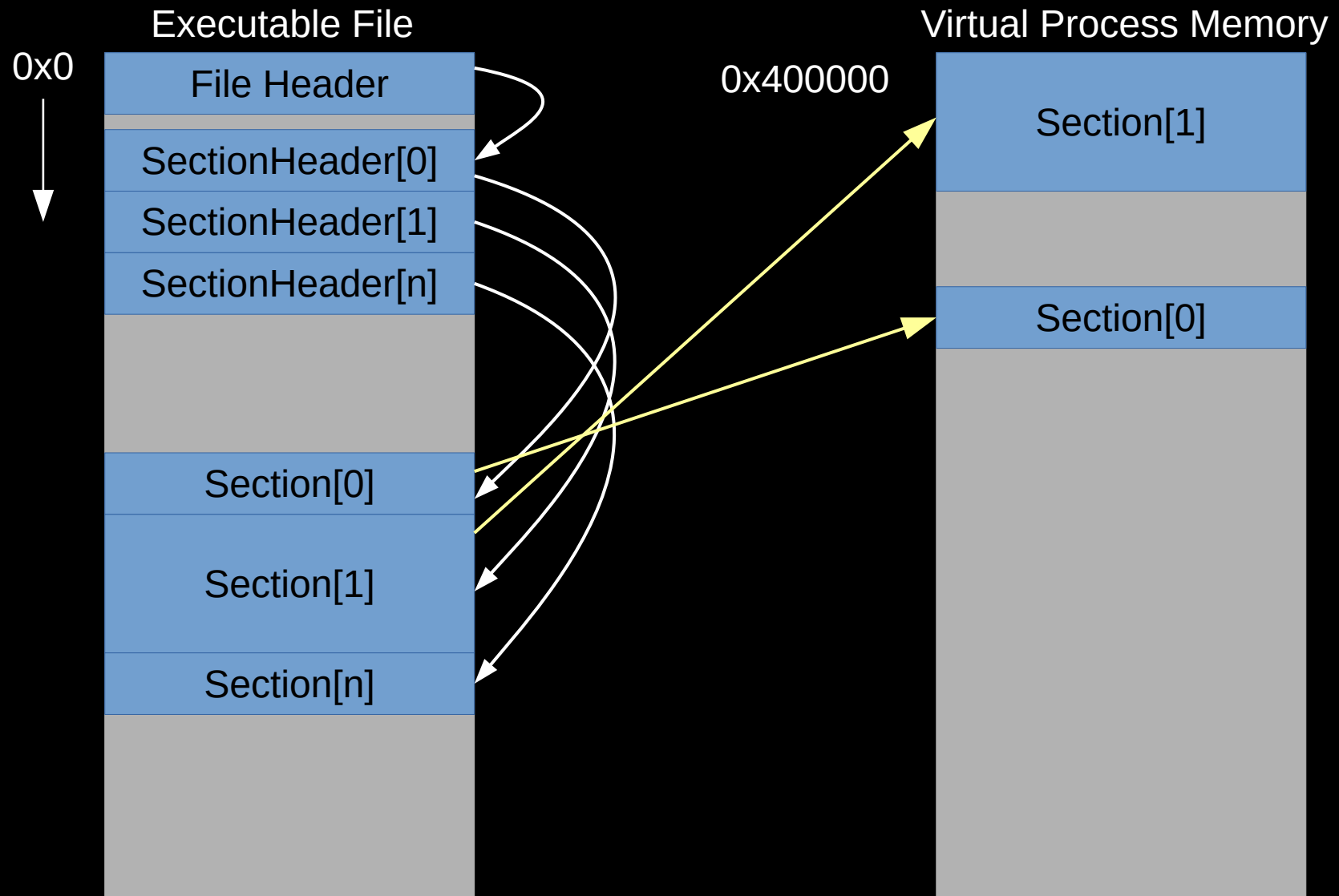
Executable formats contain the information required by the operating system to load a program into memory.

The big three are **PE (Windows)**, **MACHO (Mac OS X/iOS)**, and **ELF (Everything Else, including Linux)**

# Basic Information Executable Formats Must Answer

- Where different sections of the file should go in memory.
- What permissions these sections of memory should have.
- Relocations (how we link libraries together).
- The address of the first instruction to execute, or the, “Entry Point.”

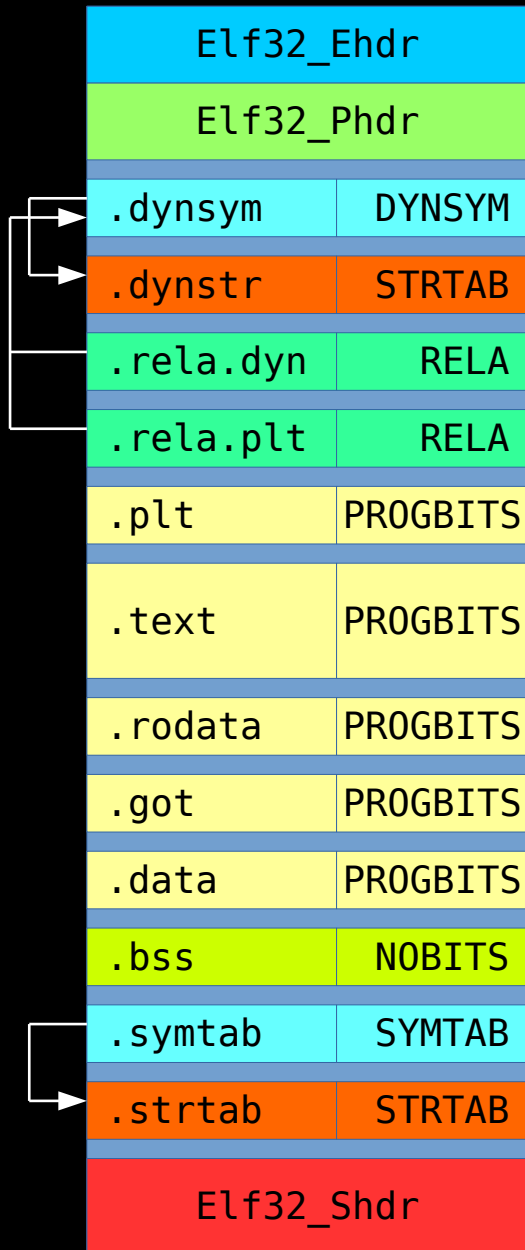
# Basic Format Agnostic Example



# Executable Linkable Format

Elf32_Ehdr		Basic File Information	
Elf32_Phdr		Program Headers - Where to put things in memory	
→	.dynsym	DYNSYM	Dynamic Symbol Table, Symbols needed for linking
	.dynstr	STRTAB	String table for .dynsym
→	.rela.dyn	RELA	Relocations not in PLT
	.rela.plt	RELA	PLT Relocations
.plt		PROGBITS	Procedure Linkage Table
.text		PROGBITS	Executable code portion of the binary
.rodata		PROGBITS	Read-only static data
.got		PROGBITS	Global Offset Table
.data		PROGBITS	Read-Write initialized static data
.bss		NOBITS	Read-Write uninitialized static data
→	.symtab	SYMTAB	Symbol Table, All symbols
	.strtab	STRTAB	String Table for .symtab
Elf32_Shdr		Section headers, define each section	

# Executable Linkable Format





# Executable Linkable Format

## Elf32\_Ehdr

### Elf32\_Phdr

.dynsym	DYNSYM
---------	--------

.dynstr	STRTAB
---------	--------

.rela.dyn	RELA
-----------	------

.rela.plt	RELA
-----------	------

.plt	PROGBITS
------	----------

.text	PROGBITS
-------	----------

.rodata	PROGBITS
---------	----------

.got	PROGBITS
------	----------

.data	PROGBITS
-------	----------

.bss	NOBITS
------	--------

.symtab	SYMTAB
---------	--------

.strtab	STRTAB
---------	--------

## Elf32\_Shdr

```
typedef struct
{
    unsigned char e_ident[EI_NIDENT];
    Elf32_Half    e_type;        /* Object file type */
    Elf32_Half    e_machine;    /* Architecture */
    Elf32_Word    e_version;    /* Object file version */
    Elf32_Addr    e_entry;      /* Entry point virtual address */
    Elf32_Off     e_phoff;      /* Program header table file offset */
    Elf32_Off     e_shoff;      /* Section header table file offset */
    Elf32_Word    e_flags;      /* Processor-specific flags */
    Elf32_Half    e_ehsize;     /* ELF header size in bytes */
    Elf32_Half    e_phentsize;  /* Program header table entry size */
    Elf32_Half    e_phnum;      /* Program header table entry count */
    Elf32_Half    e_shentsize;  /* Section header table entry size */
    Elf32_Half    e_shnum;      /* Section header table entry count */
    Elf32_Half    e_shstrndx;   /* Section header string table index */
} Elf32_Ehdr;
```

```
#define EI_NIDENT (16)
```

```
#define EI_CLASS      4        /* File class byte index */
```

```
#define ELFCLASS32    1        /* 32-bit objects */
```

```
#define ELFCLASS64    2        /* 64-bit objects */
```

```
#define EI_DATA      5        /* Data encoding byte index */
```

```
#define ELFDATA2LSB  1        /* 2's complement, little endian */
```

```
#define ELFDATA2MSB  2        /* 2's complement, big endian */
```

```
#define EI_VERSION   6        /* File version byte index */
```

```
/* Value must be EV_CURRENT */
```

# Executable Linkable Format

## Elf32\_Ehdr

### Elf32\_Phdr

.dynsym	DYNSYM
.dynstr	STRTAB
.rela.dyn	RELA
.rela.plt	RELA
.plt	PROGBITS
.text	PROGBITS
.rodata	PROGBITS
.got	PROGBITS
.data	PROGBITS
.bss	NOBITS
.symtab	SYMTAB
.strtab	STRTAB

### Elf32\_Shdr

```

typedef struct
{
    unsigned char e_ident[EI_NIDENT];
    Elf32_Half    e_type;          /* Object file type */
    Elf32_Half    e_machine;      /* Architecture */
    Elf32_Word    e_version;      /* Object file version */
    Elf32_Addr    e_entry;        /* Entry point virtual address */
    Elf32_Off     e_phoff;        /* Program header table file offset */
    Elf32_Off     e_shoff;        /* Section header table file offset */
    Elf32_Word    e_flags;        /* Processor-specific flags */
    Elf32_Half    e_ehsize;       /* ELF header size in bytes */
    Elf32_Half    e_phentsize;    /* Program header table entry size */
    Elf32_Half    e_phnum;        /* Program header table entry count */
    Elf32_Half    e_shentsize;    /* Section header table entry size */
    Elf32_Half    e_shnum;        /* Section header table entry count */
    Elf32_Half    e_shstrndx;     /* Section header string table index */
} Elf32_Ehdr;

#define ET_NONE      0 /* No file type */
#define ET_REL      1 /* Relocatable file */
#define ET_EXEC     2 /* Executable file */
#define ET_DYN      3 /* Shared object file */
#define ET_CORE     4 /* Core file */

```

# Executable Linkable Format

## Elf32\_Ehdr

### Elf32\_Phdr

.dynsym	DYNSYM
.dynstr	STRTAB
.rela.dyn	RELA
.rela.plt	RELA
.plt	PROGBITS
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.rodata	PROGBITS
.got	PROGBITS
.data	PROGBITS
.bss	NOBITS
.symtab	SYMTAB
.strtab	STRTAB

### Elf32\_Shdr

```
typedef struct
{
    unsigned char e_ident[EI_NIDENT];
    Elf32_Half    e_type;          /* Object file type */
    Elf32_Half    e_machine;      /* Architecture */
    Elf32_Word    e_version;      /* Object file version */
    Elf32_Addr    e_entry;        /* Entry point virtual address */
    Elf32_Off     e_phoff;        /* Program header table file offset */
    Elf32_Off     e_shoff;        /* Section header table file offset */
    Elf32_Word    e_flags;        /* Processor-specific flags */
    Elf32_Half    e_ehsize;       /* ELF header size in bytes */
    Elf32_Half    e_phentsize;    /* Program header table entry size */
    Elf32_Half    e_phnum;        /* Program header table entry count */
    Elf32_Half    e_shentsize;    /* Section header table entry size */
    Elf32_Half    e_shnum;        /* Section header table entry count */
    Elf32_Half    e_shstrndx;     /* Section header string table index */
} Elf32_Ehdr;

#define EM_NONE          0          /* No machine */
#define EM_SPARC         2          /* SUN SPARC */
#define EM_386           3          /* Intel 80386 */
#define EM_MIPS          8          /* MIPS R3000 big-endian */
#define EM_ARM           40         /* ARM */
#define EM_X86_64       62         /* AMD x86-64 architecture */
```

# Executable Linkable Format

## Elf32\_Ehdr

### Elf32\_Phdr

.dynsym	DYNSYM
.dynstr	STRTAB
.rela.dyn	RELA
.rela.plt	RELA
.plt	PROGBITS
.text	PROGBITS
.rodata	PROGBITS
.got	PROGBITS
.data	PROGBITS
.bss	NOBITS
.symtab	SYMTAB
.strtab	STRTAB

### Elf32\_Shdr

```
typedef struct
{
    unsigned char e_ident[EI_NIDENT];
    Elf32_Half    e_type;          /* Object file type */
    Elf32_Half    e_machine;      /* Architecture */
    Elf32_Word    e_version;      /* Object file version */
    Elf32_Addr    e_entry;        /* Entry point virtual address */
    Elf32_Off     e_phoff;        /* Program header table file offset */
    Elf32_Off     e_shoff;        /* Section header table file offset */
    Elf32_Word    e_flags;        /* Processor-specific flags */
    Elf32_Half    e_ehsize;       /* ELF header size in bytes */
    Elf32_Half    e_phentsize;   /* Program header table entry size */
    Elf32_Half    e_phnum;        /* Program header table entry count */
    Elf32_Half    e_shentsize;   /* Section header table entry size */
    Elf32_Half    e_shnum;        /* Section header table entry count */
    Elf32_Half    e_shstrndx;    /* Section header string table index */
} Elf32_Ehdr;

#define EV_NONE          0          /* Invalid ELF version */
#define EV_CURRENT      1          /* Current version */
#define EV_NUM          2
```

# Executable Linkable Format

```
typedef struct
```

```
{
    unsigned char e_ident[EI_NIDENT];
    Elf32_Half e_type; /* Object file type */
    Elf32_Half e_machine; /* Architecture */
    Elf32_Word e_version; /* Object file version */
    Elf32_Addr e_entry; /* Entry point virtual address */
    Elf32_Off e_phoff; /* Program header table file offset */
    Elf32_Off e_shoff; /* Section header table file offset */
    Elf32_Word e_flags; /* Processor-specific flags */
    Elf32_Half e_ehsize; /* ELF header size in bytes */
    Elf32_Half e_phentsize; /* Program header table entry size */
    Elf32_Half e_phnum; /* Program header table entry count */
    Elf32_Half e_shentsize; /* Section header table entry size */
    Elf32_Half e_shnum; /* Section header table entry count */
    Elf32_Half e_shstrndx; /* Section header string table index */
} Elf32_Ehdr;
```

```
ELF Header:
```

```
Magic: 7f 45 4c 46 02 01 01 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
Class: ELF64
Data: 2's complement, little endian
Version: 1 (current)
OS/ABI: UNIX - System V
ABI Version: 0
Type: EXEC (Executable file)
Machine: Advanced Micro Devices X86-64
Version: 0x1
Entry point address: 0x4048c5
Start of program headers: 64 (bytes into file)
Start of section headers: 116552 (bytes into file)
Flags: 0x0
Size of this header: 64 (bytes)
Size of program headers: 56 (bytes)
Number of program headers: 9
```

# Executable Linkable Format

Elf32\_Ehdr

Elf32\_Phdr

.dynsym DYNSTR

.dynstr STRTAB

.rela.dyn RELA

.rela.plt RELA

.plt PROGBITS

.text PROGBITS

.rodata PROGBITS

.got PROGBITS

.data PROGBITS

.bss NOBITS

.symtab SYMTAB

.strtab STRTAB

Elf32\_Shdr

```

typedef struct
{
    Elf32_Word    p_type;           /* Segment type */
    Elf32_Off     p_offset;        /* Segment file offset */
    Elf32_Addr    p_vaddr;        /* Segment virtual address */
    Elf32_Addr    p_paddr;        /* Segment physical address */
    Elf32_Word    p_filesz;       /* Segment size in file */
    Elf32_Word    p_memsz;        /* Segment size in memory */
    Elf32_Word    p_flags;        /* Segment flags */
    Elf32_Word    p_align;        /* Segment alignment */
} Elf32_Phdr;

#define PT_NULL      0 /* Program header table entry unused */
#define PT_LOAD      1 /* Loadable program segment */
#define PT_DYNAMIC   2 /* Dynamic linking information */
#define PT_INTERP    3 /* Program interpreter */
#define PT_NOTE      4 /* Auxiliary information */
#define PT_SHLIB     5 /* Reserved */
#define PT_PHDR      6 /* Entry for header table itself */
#define PT_TLS       7 /* Thread-local storage segment */
#define PT_NUM       8 /* Number of defined types */

```

# Executable Linkable Format

Elf32\_Ehdr

Elf32\_Phdr

.dynsym DYNSTR

.dynstr STRTAB

.rela.dyn RELA

.rela.plt RELA

.plt PROGBITS

.text PROGBITS

.rodata PROGBITS

.got PROGBITS

.data PROGBITS

.bss NOBITS

.symtab SYMTAB

.strtab STRTAB

Elf32\_Shdr

```

typedef struct
{
    Elf32_Word    p_type;           /* Segment type */
    Elf32_Off     p_offset;        /* Segment file offset */
    Elf32_Addr    p_vaddr;        /* Segment virtual address */
    Elf32_Addr    p_paddr;        /* Segment physical address */
    Elf32_Word    p_filesz;       /* Segment size in file */
    Elf32_Word    p_memsz;       /* Segment size in memory */
    Elf32_Word    p_flags;       /* Segment flags */
    Elf32_Word    p_align;       /* Segment alignment */
} Elf32_Phdr;

#define PF_X      (1 << 0)      /* Segment is executable */
#define PF_W      (1 << 1)      /* Segment is writable */
#define PF_R      (1 << 2)      /* Segment is readable */
#define PF_MASKOS 0x0ff00000    /* OS-specific */
#define PF_MASKPROC 0xf0000000 /* Processor-specific */

```

# Executable Linkable Format

Elf32\_Ehdr

Elf32\_Phdr

.dynsym DYNSTR

.dynstr STRTAB

.rela.dyn RELA

.rela.plt RELA

.plt PROGBITS

.text PROGBITS

.rodata PROGBITS

.got PROGBITS

.data PROGBITS

.bss NOBITS

.symtab SYMTAB

.strtab STRTAB

Elf32\_Shdr

```
typedef struct
{
    Elf32_Word    p_type;           /* Segment type */
    Elf32_Off    p_offset;         /* Segment file offset */
    Elf32_Addr    p_vaddr;         /* Segment virtual address */
    Elf32_Addr    p_paddr;         /* Segment physical address */
    Elf32_Word    p_filesz;        /* Segment size in file */
    Elf32_Word    p_memsz;         /* Segment size in memory */
    Elf32_Word    p_flags;         /* Segment flags */
    Elf32_Word    p_align;         /* Segment alignment */
} Elf32_Phdr;
```

Program Headers:

Type	Offset FileSiz	VirtAddr MemSiz	PhysAddr Flags	Align
...				
LOAD	0x0000000000000000	0x0000000000400000	0x0000000000400000	
	0x000000000001bad4	0x000000000001bad4	R E	200000
LOAD	0x000000000001bdf0	0x0000000000061bdf0	0x0000000000061bdf0	
	0x0000000000000864	0x0000000000001690	RW	200000

## p\_paddr = no one cares

“On systems for which physical addressing is relevant, this member is reserved for the segment’s physical address. Because System V ignores physical addressing for application programs, **this member has unspecified contents** for executable files and shared objects.”



# Executable Linkable Format

Elf32\_Ehdr

Elf32\_Phdr

.dynsym      DYNSYM

.dynstr      STRTAB

.rela.dyn    RELA

.rela.plt    RELA

.plt          PROGBITS

.text        PROGBITS

.rodata      PROGBITS

.got         PROGBITS

.data        PROGBITS

.bss         NOBITS

.symtab      SYMTAB

.strtab      STRTAB

Elf32\_Shdr

```
typedef struct
{
    Elf32_Word    sh_name;        /* Section name (string tbl index) */
    Elf32_Word    sh_type;       /* Section type */
    Elf32_Word    sh_flags;      /* Section flags */
    Elf32_Addr    sh_addr;       /* Section virtual addr at execution */
    Elf32_Off     sh_offset;     /* Section file offset */
    Elf32_Word    sh_size;       /* Section size in bytes */
    Elf32_Word    sh_link;       /* Link to another section */
    Elf32_Word    sh_info;       /* Additional section information */
    Elf32_Word    sh_addralign;  /* Section alignment */
    Elf32_Word    sh_entsize;    /* Entry size if section holds table */
} Elf32_Shdr;
```

## A String Table Index?

# Executable Linkable Format

Elf32_Ehdr	
Elf32_Phdr	
.dynsym	DYNSYM
.dynstr	STRTAB
.rela.dyn	RELA
.rela.plt	RELA
.plt	PROGBITS
.text	PROGBITS
.rodata	PROGBITS
.got	PROGBITS
.data	PROGBITS
.bss	NOBITS
.symtab	SYMTAB
.strtab	STRTAB
Elf32_Shdr	

```
typedef struct
{
    Elf32_Word    sh_name;        /* Section name (string tbl index) */
    Elf32_Word    sh_type;        /* Section type */
    Elf32_Word    sh_flags;       /* Section flags */
    Elf32_Addr    sh_addr;        /* Section virtual addr at execution */
    Elf32_Off     sh_offset;      /* Section file offset */
    Elf32_Word    sh_size;        /* Section size in bytes */
    Elf32_Word    sh_link;        /* Link to another section */
    Elf32_Word    sh_info;        /* Additional section information */
    Elf32_Word    sh_addralign;   /* Section alignment */
    Elf32_Word    sh_entsize;    /* Entry size if section holds table */
} Elf32_Shdr;
```

## A String Table Index?

String table sections hold null-terminated character sequences, commonly called strings. The object file uses these strings to represent symbol and section names. One references a string as an index into the string table section.

# Executable Linkable Format

Elf32\_Ehdr

Elf32\_Phdr

.dynsym DYNSTR

.dynstr STRTAB

.rela.dyn RELA

.rela.plt RELA

.plt PROGBITS

.text

.rodata

.got

.data PROGBITS

.bss NOBITS

.symtab SYMTAB

.strtab STRTAB

Elf32\_Shdr

```
typedef struct
{
    Elf32_Word    sh_name;        /* Section name (string tbl index) */
    Elf32_Word    sh_type;        /* Section type */
    Elf32_Word    sh_flags;       /* Section flags */
    Elf32_Addr    sh_addr;        /* Section virtual addr at execution */
    Elf32_Off     sh_offset;      /* Section file offset */
    Elf32_Word    sh_size;        /* Section size in bytes */
    Elf32_Word    sh_link;        /* Link to another section */
    Elf32_Word    sh_info;        /* Section information */
    Elf32_Word    sh_addralign;   /* Section alignment */
    Elf32_Word    sh_entsize;     /* Entry size if section holds table */
};
```

## This is what a string table looks like

```
03A0h: 00 6C 69 62 63 2E 73 6F 2E 36 00 66 6F 70 65 6E .libc.so.6 fopen
03B0h: 00 66 74 65 6C 6C 00 66 73 65 65 6B 00 6D 61 6C .ftell.fseek.mal
03C0h: 6C 6F 63 00 73 74 64 65 72 72 00 66 77 72 69 74 loc.stderr.fwrit
03D0h: 65 00 66 72 65 61 64 00 5F 5F 6C 69 62 63 5F 73 e.fread.__libc_s
03E0h: 74 61 72 74 5F 6D 61 69 6E 00 73 6E 70 72 69 6E tart_main.snprin
03F0h: 74 66 00 5F 5F 67 6D 6F 6E 5F 73 74 61 72 74 5F tf.__gmon_start_
```

String table sections hold null-terminated character sequences, commonly called strings. The object file uses these strings to represent symbol and section names. One references a string as an index into the string table section.

# Executable Linkable Format

Elf32_Ehdr	
Elf32_Phdr	
.dynsym	DYNSYM
.dynstr	STRTAB
.rela.dyn	RELA
.rela.plt	RELA
.plt	PROGBITS
.text	PROGBITS
.rodata	PROGBITS
.got	PROGBITS
.data	PROGBITS
.bss	NOBITS
.symtab	SYMTAB
.strtab	STRTAB
Elf32_Shdr	

```
typedef struct
{
    Elf32_Word    sh_name;        /* Section name (string tbl index) */
    Elf32_Word    sh_type;       /* Section type */
    Elf32_Word    sh_flags;     /* Section flags */
    Elf32_Addr    sh_addr;      /* Section virtual addr at execution */
    Elf32_Off     sh_offset;    /* Section file offset */
    Elf32_Word    sh_size;      /* Section size in bytes */
    Elf32_Word    sh_link;     /* Link to another section */
    Elf32_Word    sh_info;     /* Section information */
    Elf32_Word    sh_addralign; /* Section alignment */
    Elf32_Word    sh_entsize;   /* Entry size if section holds table */
};
```

This is a string table

## This is what a string table looks like

```
03A0h: 00 6C 69 62 63 2E 73 6F 2E 36 00 66 6F 70 65 6E .libc.so.6 fopen
03B0h: 00 66 74 65 6C 6C 00 66 73 65 65 6B 00 6D 61 6C .ftell.fseek.mal
03C0h: 6C 6F 63 00 73 74 64 65 72 72 00 66 77 72 69 74 loc.stderr.fwrit
03D0h: 65 00 66 72 65 61 64 00 5F 5F 6C 69 62 63 5F 73 e.fread.__libc_s
03E0h: 74 61 72 74 5F 6D 61 69 6E 00 73 6E 70 72 69 6E tart_main.snprin
03F0h: 74 66 00 5F 5F 67 6D 6F 6E 5F 73 74 61 72 74 5F tf.__gmon_start_
```

String table sections hold null-terminated character sequences, commonly called strings. The object file uses these strings to represent symbols. One references a string as an index into the string table section.

This is a string table

# Executable Linkable Format

Elf32_Ehdr	
Elf32_Phdr	
.dynsym	DYNSYM
.dynstr	STRTAB
.rela.dyn	RELA
.rela.plt	RELA
.plt	PROGBITS
.text	PROGBITS
.rodata	PROGBITS
.got	PROGBITS
.data	PROGBITS
.bss	NOBITS
.symtab	SYMTAB
.strtab	STRTAB
Elf32_Shdr	

```
typedef struct
```

```
{
```

```
Elf32_Word
```

```
Elf32_Word
```

```
Elf32_Word
```

```
Elf32_Addr
```

```
Elf32_Off
```

```
Elf32_Word
```

```
Elf32_Word
```

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Elf32_Word
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Elf32_Word
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Elf32_Word
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Elf32_Word
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```
Elf32_Word
```

```
Elf32_Word
```

**But wait! How do I know which string table to use when I look up the names of sections?**

**This is**

```
03A0h: 00 6C 69 62 63
```

```
03B0h: 00 66 74 65 6C
```

```
03C0h: 6C 6F 63 00 73 74
```

```
03D0h: 65 00 66 72 65 61 64 00 5F 5F 6C 69
```

```
03E0h: 74 61 72 74 5F 6D 61 69 6E 00 73 6E 70
```

```
03F0h: 74 66 00 5F 5F 67 6D 6F 6E 5F 73 74 61 72
```

String table sections hold null-terminated character sequences, commonly called strings. The object file uses these strings to represent symbols. One references a string as an index into the string table section.

**This is a string table**

# Executable Linkable Format

```

typedef struct
{
    unsigned char e_ident[EI_NIDENT];
    Elf32_Half e_type; /* Object file type */
    Elf32_Half e_machine; /* Architecture */
    Elf32_Word e_version; /* Object file version */
    Elf32_Addr e_entry; /* Entry point virtual address */
    Elf32_Off e_phoff; /* Program header table file offset */
    Elf32_Off e_shoff; /* Section header table file offset */
    Elf32_Word e_flags; /* Processor-specific flags */
    Elf32_Half e_ehsize; /* ELF header size in bytes */
    Elf32_Half e_phentsize; /* Program header table entry size */
    Elf32_Half e_phnum; /* Program header table entry count */
    Elf32_Half e_shentsize; /* Section header table entry size */
    Elf32_Half e_shnum; /* Section header table entry count */
    Elf32_Half e_shstrndx; /* Section header string table index */
} Elf32_Ehdr;

```

ELF Header:

`e_shstrndx` from `Elf32_Ehdr` tells us which section holds the the string table for the names of all the sections. Typically this section is called `".shstrtab"` and isn't listed in this class because I ran out of room for my cool ELF File graphic with all the other sections.

```

Type:          EXEC (Executable file)
Machine:       Advanced Micro Devices X86-64
Version:       0x1
Entry point address: 0x4048c5
Start of program headers: 64 (bytes into file)
Start of section headers: 16552 (bytes into file)
Flags:         0x0
Size of this header: 64 (bytes)
Size of program headers: 56 (bytes)
Number of program headers: UNCLASSIFIED

```

# Executable Linkable Format

**Elf32\_Ehdr**

**Elf32\_Phdr**

**.dynsym**      **DYNSYM**

**.dynstr**      **STRTAB**

**.rela.dyn**    **RELA**

**.rela.plt**    **RELA**

**.plt**          **PROGBITS**

**.text**        **PROGBITS**

**.rodata**      **PROGBITS**

**.got**         **PROGBITS**

**.data**        **PROGBITS**

**.bss**         **NOBITS**

**.symtab**      **SYMTAB**

**.strtab**      **STRTAB**

**Elf32\_Shdr**

```
typedef struct
```

```
{
```

```
    Elf32_Word    sh_name;        /* Section name (string tbl index) */
    Elf32_Word    sh_type;        /* Section type */
    Elf32_Word    sh_flags;       /* Section flags */
    Elf32_Addr    sh_addr;        /* Section virtual addr at execution */
    Elf32_Off     sh_offset;      /* Section file offset */
    Elf32_Word    sh_size;        /* Section size in bytes */
    Elf32_Word    sh_link;        /* Link to another section */
    Elf32_Word    sh_info;        /* Additional section information */
    Elf32_Word    sh_addralign;   /* Section alignment */
    Elf32_Word    sh_entsize;    /* Entry size if section holds table */

```

```
} Elf32_Shdr;
```

```
#define SHT_NULL          0        /* Section header table entry unused */
#define SHT_PROGBITS     1        /* Program data */
#define SHT_SYMTAB       2        /* Symbol table */
#define SHT_STRTAB       3        /* String table */
#define SHT_RELA         4        /* Relocation entries with addends */
#define SHT_HASH         5        /* Symbol hash table */
#define SHT_DYNAMIC      6        /* Dynamic linking information */
#define SHT_NOTE         7        /* Notes */
#define SHT_NOBITS       8        /* Program space with no data (bss) */
#define SHT_REL          9        /* Relocation entries, no addends */

```

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} Elf32_Shdr;
```

```
#define SHF_WRITE      (1 << 0) /* Writable */
#define SHF_ALLOC      (1 << 1) /* Occupies memory during execution */
#define SHF_EXECINSTR (1 << 2) /* Executable */
#define SHF_MERGE      (1 << 4) /* Might be merged */
#define SHF_STRINGS    (1 << 5) /* Contains nul-terminated strings */
#define SHF_INFO_LINK  (1 << 6) /* `sh_info' contains SHT index */
#define SHF_LINK_ORDER (1 << 7) /* Preserve order after combining */
```



# Executable Linkable Format

Elf32\_Ehdr

Elf32\_Phdr

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.dynstr STRTAB

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Elf32\_Shdr

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```

**Remember:**

`sh_addr` *is for suckers*

Remember, *program headers* tell us where things will land in memory, *not section headers*.

The only reason `sh_addr` exists is to break bad tools, or draw attention away from program headers *where people should be anyway*.

# Executable Linkable Format

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    Elf32_Word    sh_addralign;   /* Section alignment */
    Elf32_Word    sh_entsize;     /* Entry size if section holds table */
} Elf32_Shdr;
```

**sh\_offset:** "This member's value gives the byte offset from the beginning of the file to the first byte in the section"

**sh\_size:** "Section size in bytes"

**sh\_link:** Depends on section type, but some sections depend on other sections. For example, Symbol Tables are linked to String Tables that hold the symbol names.

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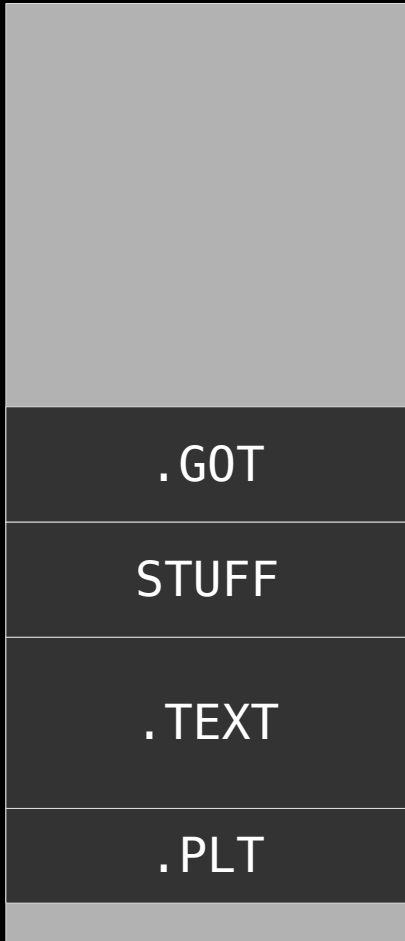
**sh\_addralign:** ...

**sh\_entsize:** ...

# Dynamic Linking

Time Out!

Let's talk about dynamic linking.



# Dynamic Linking

Time Out!

alk

ng.



It's time for  
**ASSEMBLY!!!**

.GOT

STUFF

.TEXT

.PLT





# Dynamic Linking

You are now experiencing the joys of, “Lazy Binding/Linking,” though the process goes by many names.

“Finally, GOT ... [blah blah] ... the function named `_dl_runtime_resolve`, which is basically an assembly stub that does some register/stack setup and calls into a C function called `dl_fixup()`. `dl_fixup` is the workhorse that actually resolves the symbol in question. Once the symbol's address is found, the program's GOT entry for it must be patched. This is also the job of `dl_fixup()`. Once `dl_fixup()` patches the correct GOT entry, the next time the function is called, it will again jump to the PLT entry, but this time the indirect jump there will go to the symbol's address instead of the following instruction.”

“This method of lazy symbol resolution avoids costly lookups for functions that aren't even called. You can force the linker to eagerly resolve symbols on program startup by setting the `LD_BIND_NOW` environment variable.”

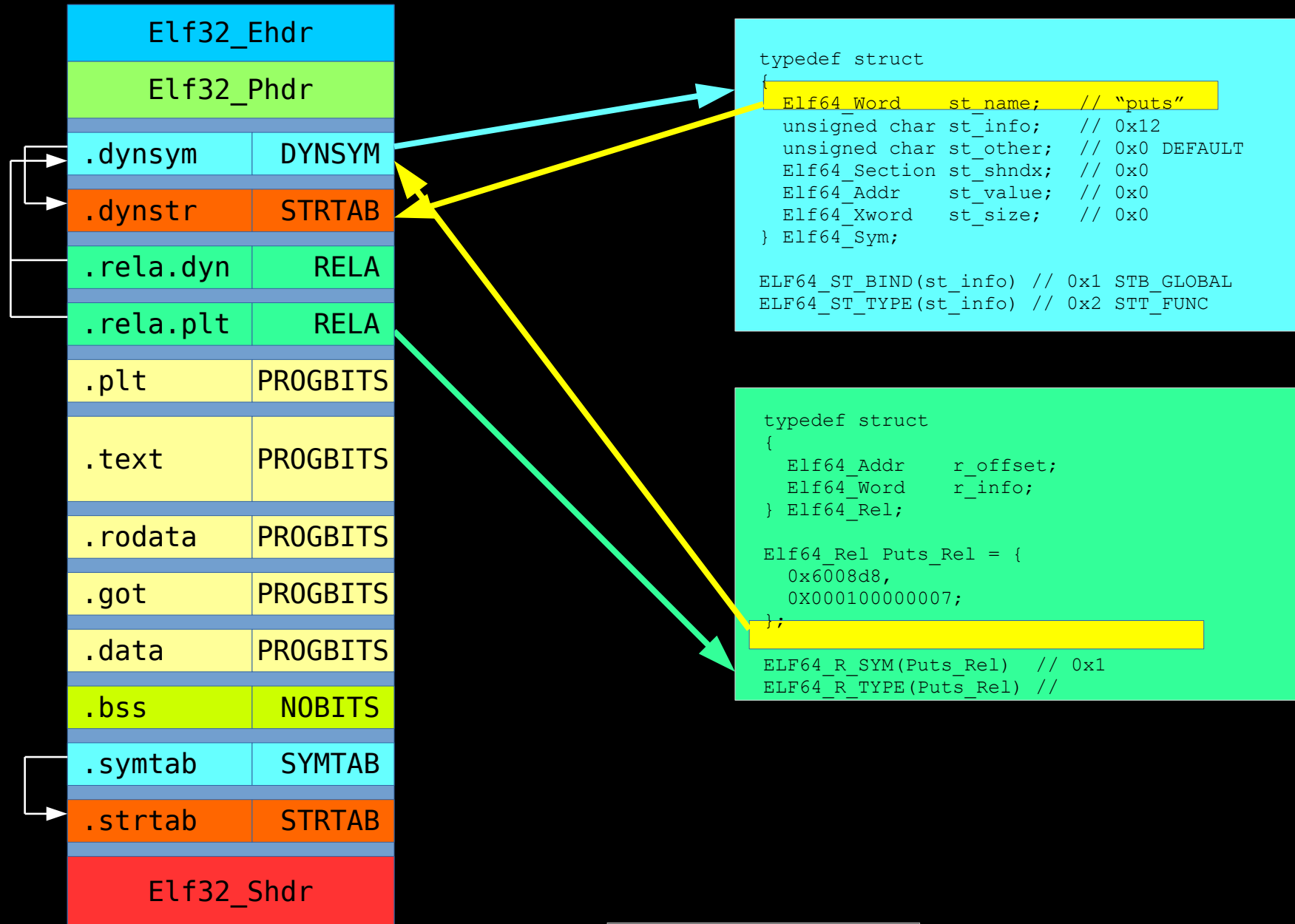
<http://users.eecs.northwestern.edu/~kch479/docs/notes/linking.html>





# Executable Linkable Format

Talk high-level on what the information for linking puts looks like



# Enough with the Bits

- `/usr/include/elf.h`
- “Executable and Linkable Format (ELF)” (pdf)

Armed with these two documents, and the information we covered today, you can begin working with ELF files

# Thought Problems

- What would be required to programmatically modify an ELF in place?
- Could you patch additional functionality into an ELF streaming realtime with only a couple kilobytes of visibility?

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Elf32_Phdr	
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.plt	PROGBITS
.text	PROGBITS
.rodata	PROGBITS
.got	PROGBITS
.data	PROGBITS
.bss	NOBITS
.symtab	SYMTAB
.strtab	STRTAB
Elf32_Shdr	

# Talk is Cheap, Code is Law

- ~~Brief overview of what executable formats do. (15 minutes)~~
- ~~We will break down the ELF file format. (1 hour)~~
- Students will implement a program to parse ELF files. (1 hour)
- Bonus Points: Students can programmatically rearrange, change, or resize portions of an ELF file on disk while maintaining runtime behavior.