

ELF1 7D Virtual Memory

Young W. Lim

2021-01-15 Fri

1 Based on

2 Virtual memory

- Background
- Virtual memory
- Kernel virtual / logical addresses
- Kernel logical address
- Kernel virtual address
- User virtual address
- Memory management unit
- User space

"Study of ELF loading and relocs", 1999

http://netwinder.osuosl.org/users/p/patb/public_html/elf_relocs.html

I, the copyright holder of this work, hereby publish it under the following licenses: GNU head Permission is granted to copy, distribute and/or modify this document under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License, Version 1.2 or any later version published by the Free Software Foundation; with no Invariant Sections, no Front-Cover Texts, and no Back-Cover Texts. A copy of the license is included in the section entitled GNU Free Documentation License.

CC BY SA This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. In short: you are free to share and make derivative works of the file under the conditions that you appropriately attribute it, and that you distribute it only under a license compatible with this one.

Compiling 32-bit program on 64-bit gcc

- `gcc -v`
- `gcc -m32 t.c`
- `sudo apt-get install gcc-multilib`
- `sudo apt-get install g++-multilib`
- `gcc-multilib`
- `g++-multilib`
- `gcc -m32`
- `objdump -m i386`

- **logical address**
 - generated by CPU while a program is running
 - since it does not exist physically, it is also known as **virtual address**
 - used as a reference to access the physical memory location by CPU
- **logical address space**
 - the set of all **logical addresses** generated by a program's perspective.

<https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/logical-and-physical-address-in-operating-system/>

- **physical address**
 - identifies a physical location in a memory
 - the user never directly uses the **physical address** but can access by the corresponding **logical address**.
- **physical address space**
 - all **physical addresses** corresponding to the **logical addresses** in a **Logical address space**

<https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/logical-and-physical-address-in-operating-system/>

- **virtual addresses**
 - the address you use in your programs,
 - the address that your CPU use to fetch data, is not real and gets translated via MMU to its corresponding physical address

- **virtual address space**
 - Linux running 32-bit has 4GB address space
 - each process has its own **virtual address space**

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/15851225/difference-between-physical-logical->

- **MMU** (memory-management unit) hardware
 - maps **logical address** to its corresponding **physical address**
- **OS** along with **MMU**
 - the **user program** generates the **logical address** and
 - thinks that the program is running in this **logical address**
 - but to access physical memory for its execution, this **logical address** must be mapped to the **physical address** by **MMU**

<https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/logical-and-physical-address-in-operating-system/>

Logical vs virtual addresses (1)

Whenever your program is under execution CPU generates logical address for instructions which contains (16 bit Segment Selector and 32 bit offset). Basically Virtual(Linear address) is generated using logical address fields. Segment selector is 16 bit field out of which first 13bit is index (Which is a pointer to the segment descriptor resides in GDT, described below) , 1 bit TI field (TI = 1, Refer LDT , TI=0 Refer GDT)

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/15851225/difference-between-physical-logical->

Logical vs virtual addresses (2)

Now Segment Selector OR say segment identifier refers to Code Segment OR Data Segment OR Stack Segment etc. Linux contains one GDT/LDT (Global/Local Descriptor Table) Which contains 8 byte descriptor of each segments and holds the base (virtual) address of the segment. So for for each logical address, virtual address is calculated using below steps.

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/15851225/difference-between-physical-logical->

Logical vs virtual addresses (3)

- 1 Examines the TI field of the Segment Selector to determine which Descriptor Table stores the Segment Descriptor. This field indicates that the Descriptor is either in the GDT (in which case the segmentation unit gets the base linear address of the GDT from the gdtr register) or in the active LDT (in which case the segmentation unit gets the base linear address of that LDT from the ldtr register).

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/15851225/difference-between-physical-logical->

Logical vs virtual addresses (4)

- 1 Computes the address of the Segment Descriptor from the index field of the Segment Selector. The index field is multiplied by 8 (the size of a Segment Descriptor), and the result is added to the content of the `gdtr` or `ldtr` register.
- 2 Adds the offset of the logical address to the Base field of the Segment Descriptor, thus obtaining the linear(Virtual) address.

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/15851225/difference-between-physical-logical->

high / low memory (1)

- Low memory
Memory for which logical addresses exist in kernel space. On almost every system you will likely encounter, all memory is low memory.
- High memory
Memory for which logical addresses do not exist, because it is beyond the address range set aside for kernel virtual addresses.

<https://www.oreilly.com/library/view/linux-device-drivers/0596005903/ch15.html>

-kmap returns a kernel virtual address for any page in the system. For low-memory pages, it just returns the logical address of the page; for high-memory pages, kmap creates a special mapping in a dedicated part of the kernel address space. Mappings created with kmap should always be freed with kunmap; a limited number of such mappings is available, so it is better not to hold on to them for too long. kmap calls maintain a counter, so if two or more functions both call kmap on the same page, the right thing happens. Note also that kmap can sleep if no mappings are available.

<https://www.oreilly.com/library/view/linux-device-drivers/0596005903/ch15.html>

Virtual address and physical address (1)

- **Physical addresses** are provided directly by the machine
 - one physical address space per machine
 - addresses typically range from some minimum (sometimes 0) to some maximum,
 - though some portions of this range are usually used by the OS and/or devices, but not available for user processes

<https://www.student.cs.uwaterloo.ca/~cs350/F07/notes/mem.pdf>

Virtual address and physical address (2)

- **Virtual addresses** (or logical addresses) are addresses provided by the OS
 - one virtual address space per process
 - addresses typically start at zero, but not necessarily
 - space may consist of several segments

<https://www.student.cs.uwaterloo.ca/~cs350/F07/notes/mem.pdf>

Virtual address and physical address (3)

- address translation (or address binding) means mapping virtual addresses to physical addresses

<https://www.student.cs.uwaterloo.ca/~cs350/F07/notes/mem.pdf>

Virtual address and physical address (4)

- size of each section except stack is specified in ELF file
- sections which are initialized from the ELF file
 - code (i.e., `.text`)
 - read-only data
 - initialized data segments
- other remaining sections are initially zero-filled
- sections have their own specified alignment
- segments are page aligned
- 3 segments = (`.text` + `.rodata`), (`.data` + `.sbss` + `.bss`), (stack)
- not all programs contain this many segments and sections

<https://www.student.cs.uwaterloo.ca/~cs350/F07/notes/mem.pdf>

Single address space (1)

- simple systems
- sharing the same memory space
 - memory and peripherals
 - all processes and OS
- no memory protection

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Single address space (2)

- CPUs with single address space
 - 8086 - 80286
 - ARM Cortex-M
 - 8 / 16-bit PIC
 - AVR
 - most 8- and 16-bit systems

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Single address space (3)

- portable c programs expect flat memory
 - multiple memory access methods limit portability
- management is tricky
 - need to know / detect total RAM
 - need to keep processes separated
- no protection

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Virtual memory (1)

- a system that uses an address mapping
- maps virtual address space to physical address space
 - to physical RAM
 - to hardware devices
 - PCI devices
 - GPU RAM
 - On-SOC IP blocks

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Virtual memory (2)

- Advantages

- each process can have a different memory mapping
 - one process' RAM is invisible to other processes
 - built in memory protection
 - kernel RAM is invisible to user space processes
- memory can be moved
- memory can be swapped to disk

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

- Advantages (continued)
 - hardware device memory can be mapped into process' address space
requires the kernel to perform the mapping
 - physical RAM can be mapped into multiple processes at once
shared memory
 - memory regions can have access permissions
read / write / execute

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Virtual memory (4)

- Physical addresses
addresses used by the hardware (DMA, peripherals)
- Virtual addresses
addresses used by software
 - RISC: load/store instructions
 - CISC: any instruction accessing memory

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Virtual memory (5)

- mapping is performed in hardware
- no performance penalty for accessing already mapped RAM regions
- permissions are handled without penalty
- the same instructions are used to access RAM and mapped hardware
- software will only use virtual addresses in its normal operation

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

MMU (Memory Management Unit) (1)

- **MMU** is the hardware responsible for implementing **virtual memory**
- sits between the **CPU** core and **memory**
- usually the part of the physical CPU
on ARM, it's part of the licensed core
- separate from the **RAM controller**
DDR controller is a separate IP block

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

MMU (Memory Management Unit) (2)

- transparently handles all memory accesses from load / store instructions
- maps memory accesses using **virtual addresses** to system RAM and peripheral hardware
- handles permissions
- generates an exception (**page fault**) on an invalid access

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

TLB (Translation Lookaside Buffer)

- TLB is consulted by the MMU when CPU accesses a virtual address
- if the virtual address is in the TLB, the MMU can look up the physical address
- if the virtual address is not in the TLB, the MMU will generate a page fault exception and interrupt the CPU
- if the virtual address is in the TLB, but the permissions are insufficient, the MMU will generate a page fault

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

- a page fault is a CPU exception generated when software attempts to use an invalide virtual address
 - the virtual address is not mapped for the process requesting it
 - the processes has insufficient permissions for the address
 - the virtual address is valide, but swapped out

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Kernel virtual address (1)

- in **linux**, the **kernel** uses **virtual addresses** as **user space processes** do
this is not true of all OS's
- **virtual address space** is split
 - 1 the upper part is used for the **kernel**
 - 2 the lower part is used for **user space**
 - 3 **32-bit linux** have the split address **0xc0000000**

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Kernel virtual address (2)

- By default, the **kernel** uses the top 1GB of **virtual address space**
- each **user space process** gets the lower 3GB of **virtual address space**

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Virtual addresses - linux (1)

- **kernel address space** is the area above **CONFIG_PAGE_OFFSET**
- for 32-bit, this is configurable at kernel build time
 - the kernel can be given a different amount of address space as desired
- for 64-bit, the split varies by architecture but it is high enough

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Virtual addresses - linux (2)

- three kinds of virtual addresses in Linux
- Kernel
 - Kernel Logical Address
 - Kernel Virtual Address
- User Space
 - User Virtual Address

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Kernel virtual / logical addresses (1)

- the kernel maps most of the *kernel virtual address space* to perform 1:1 mapping with an offset of the top part of physical memory (3GB - 4GB)
 - slightly less than for 1Gb for 32bit x86
 - can be different for other processors or configurations
- for kernel code on x86 address 0xc0000001 is mapped to physical address 0x1.
- This is called **logical mapping**
 - a 1:1 mapping (with an offset) that allows the kernel to access most of the physical memory of the machine.

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/8708463/difference-between-kernel-virtual-address>

Kernel virtual / logical addresses (2)

- in the following cases, the kernel keeps a region at the top of its virtual address space where it maps a "random" **page**
 - when we have more than **1Gb** physical memory on a 32bit machine,
 - when we want to reference non-contiguous physical memory blocks as contiguous
 - when we want to map memory mapped IO regions
- this mapping does not follow the 1:1 pattern of the logical mapping area.
- This is called the **virtual mapping**.

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/8708463/difference-between-kernel-virtual-address>

Kernel virtual / logical addresses (3)

- on many platforms (x86 is an example), both the **logical** and **virtual** mapping are done using the same hardware mechanism (TLB controlling virtual memory).
- In many cases, the **logical** mapping is actually done using **virtual** memory facility of the processor, (this can be a little confusing)
- The difference is in which mapping scheme is used:
 - 1:1 for **logical**
 - random for **virtual** (paging)

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/8708463/difference-between-kernel-virtual-address>

Kernel virtual / logical addresses (4)

- 3 kinds of addressing
- ① **Logical Addressing** : Address is formed by base and offset
This is nothing but segmented addressing,
where the address (or offset) in the program is always used
with the base value in the segment descriptor
- ① **Linear Addressing** : also called **virtual address**
Here **virtual** addresses are contiguous,
but the **physical** address are not contiguous
Paging is used to implement this.
- ① **Physical Addressing** : the actual address on the Main Memory

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/8708463/difference-between-kernel-virtual-address>

Kernel virtual / logical addresses (5)

- in linux, the kernel memory (in address space) is beyond 3 GB, i.e. 0xc000000.
- the addresses used by Kernel are not **physical** addresses
 - to map the **virtual** address from 3GB to 4GB it uses **PAGE_OFFSET**.
 - no page translation is involved.
 - contiguous address
 - except 896 MB on x86.
 - beyond the address space from 3GB to 4GB, **paging** is used for translation.
 - **vmalloc** returns these addresses

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/8708463/difference-between-kernel-virtual-address>

Kernel virtual / logical addresses (6)

- when **virtual** memory is referred in context of **user space**, then it is through **paging**
- if **kernel** memory is mentioned then it is the address mapped
 - by **PAGE_OFFSET** (kernel logical address)
 - by **vmalloc** (kernel virtual address)

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/8708463/difference-between-kernel-virtual-address>

Kernel virtual / logical addresses (7)

- **PAGE_OFFSET** in x86 is 0XC0000000,
(1100_0000_0000_0000_0000_0000_0000_0000)
or 3 gigabytes ($3 * 2^{30}$)
- this is where the **3G/1G split** is defined.
- every address above **PAGE_OFFSET**
is the **kernel virtual address**
- any address below **PAGE_OFFSET**
is a **user space address**

<https://linux-mm.org/VirtualMemory>

Kernel virtual / logical addresses (8)

- to get kernel memory in byte-sized chunks.
 - `kmalloc()`
 - virtually contiguous
 - physically contiguous
 - `vmalloc()`
 - virtually contiguous
 - not necessarily physically contiguous

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/116343/what-is-the-difference-between-vmalloc>

Kernel virtual / logical addresses (9)

- On a 32-bit system, `kmalloc()`
 - returns the kernel **logical** address (it is a virtual address)
 - the **direct** mapping (constant offset)
 - a contiguous **physical** chunk of RAM.
 - suitable for DMA where we give only

- `vmalloc()`
 - returns the kernel **virtual** address
 - **paging** (not direct mapping)
 - not necessarily a contiguous chunk of RAM
 - Useful for large memory allocation and in cases where non-contiguous physical memory is allowed

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/116343/what-is-the-difference-between-vmalloc>

Kernel virtual / logical addresses (10)

- kernel **logical** addresses use normal CPU memory access functions.
- On 32-bit systems, only 4GB of kernel **logical** address space exists, even if more **physical** memory than that is in use.
- **logical** address space supported by **physical** memory can be allocated with `kmalloc()`

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/8708463/difference-between-kernel-virtual-address>

Kernel virtual / logical addresses (11)

- kernel **virtual** addresses do not necessarily have corresponding **logical** addresses.
- You can allocate **physical** memory with **vmalloc** and get back a **virtual** address that has no corresponding **logical** address (on 32-bit systems with PAE, for example).
- use **kmap()** to assign a **logical** address to that **virtual** address.

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/8708463/difference-between-kernel-virtual-address>

Kernel logical addresses (1)

- normal address space of the kernel
`kmalloc()`
- virtual addresses are a fixed offset
from their physical addresses
virtual `0xc0000000` → physical `0x00000000`
- easy conversion between physical and virtual addresses

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Kernel logical addresses (2)

- kernel logical addresses can be converted to and from physical addresses using these macros
`__pa(x)`
`__va(x)`
- for small memory systems (less than 1G of RAM) kernel logical address space starts at `PAGE_OFFSET` and goes through the end of physical memory

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Kernel logical addresses (3)

- kernel logical address space includes
 - memory allocated with `kmalloc()` and most other allocation methods
 - **kernel stacks** per process
- kernel logical memory can never be swapped out

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Kernel logical addresses (4)

- kernel logical addresses use a fixed mapping between physical and virtual address space
- this means virtually contiguous regions are by nature also physically contiguous
- this combined with inability to be swapped out, makes them suitable for DMA transfers

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Kernel logical addresses (5)

- for 32-bit large memory systems ($> 1\text{GB}$ RAM)
not all of the physical RAM can be mapped
into the kernel's address space
- kernel address space is the top 1GB of
virtual address space, by default
- upto 104 MB is reserved at the top of
the kernel memory space
for non-contiguous allocation
`vmalloc()`

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Kernel logical addresses (6)

- in a large memory case, only the bottom part of physical RAM is mapped directly into kernel logical address space
- only the bottom part of physical RAM has a kernel logical address
- this case is never applied to 64-bit systems
 - there is always enough kernel address space to accommodate all the RAM

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Low and High Memory

- low memory
 - physical memory which has a kernel logical address
 - physically contiguous
- high memory
 - physical memory beyond ~896MB
 - has no logical address
 - not physically contiguous when used in the kernel
 - only on 32-bit

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Kernel virtual addresses (1)

- kernel virtual addresses are above the kernel logical address mapping
- kernel virtual addresses - `vmalloc()`
- kernel logical addresses - `kmalloc()`

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Kernel virtual addresses (2)

- kernel virtual addresses are used for
 - non-contiguous memory mappings
 - often for large buffers which could potentially be too large to find contiguous memory
 - `vmalloc()`
 - **memory-mapped I/O**
 - map peripheral devices into kernel
 - PCI, SoC IP blocks
 - `ioremap()`, `kmap()`

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Kernel virtual addresses (3)

- the important difference is that memory in the **kernel virtual address** area (`vmalloc()` area) is non-contiguous physically
- this makes it easier to allocate, especially for large buffers on small memory systems
- this makes it unsuitable for **DMA**

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Kernel virtual addresses (4)

- in a large memory situation, the **kernel virtual address** area is smaller, because there is more physical memory
- an interesting case, where more memory means less space for **kernel virtual addresses**
- in 64-bit, of course, this doesn't happen, as PAGE_OFFSET is large, and there is much more **virtual address** space

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

User virtual addresses (1)

- represent memory used by **user space programs**
 - the most of the memory on most systems
 - where the most of the compilation is
- all addresses below PAGE_OFFSET
- each **process** has its own mapping
 - **threads** share a mapping
 - complex behavior with clone(2)

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

User virtual addresses (2)

- **kernel logical addresses** use a fixed mapping
user space processes make full use of the **MMU**
 - only the used portions of RAM are mapped
 - memory is not contiguous
 - memory may be swapped out
 - memory can be moved

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

User virtual addresses (3)

- since **user virtual addresses** are not guaranteed to be swapped in, or even allocated at all,
- **user buffers** are not suitable for use by the kernel (or for DMA), by default
- each **process** has its own memory map struct `mm` pointers in `task_struct`
- at **context switch** time, the **memory map** is changed this is part of the overhead

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Memory management unit (1)

- the MMU manages virtual address mappings
 - maps virtual addresses to physical addresses
- the MMU operates on basic units of memory : **pages**
 - page size varies by architecture
 - some architectures have configurable page sizes

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Memory management unit (2)

- common page sizes
 - ARM - 4k
 - ARM64 - 4k or 64k
 - MIPS - widely configurable
 - x86 - 4k

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Memory management unit (3)

- a **page** is
 - a unit of memory size
 - aligned at the page size
 - abstract
- a **page frame** refers to
 - a physical memory block
which is page sized and page aligned
 - physical
- the pfn (**page frame number**) is often used to refer to physical page frames in the kernel

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Memory management unit (4)

- the MMU operates on **pages**
- the MMU maps physical frames to virtual addresses
- a memory map for a process contains many mappings
- a mapping often covers multiple pages
- the TLB holds each mapping
 - virtual address
 - physical address
 - permissions

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Page faults

- when a process accesses a region of memory that is not mapped, the **MMU** will generate a **page fault** exception
- the **kernel** handles **page fault** exceptions regularly as part of its memory management design
- TLB can contain only the part of the required maps for a process
- **page faults** at **context switch** time
- **lazy allocation**

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Basic TLB mappings (1)

- user virtual address space
 - mapped pages unmapped space
- physical address space
 - allocated frames
- TLB mappings
 - TLB entries (page, page frame)
 - virtually contiguous regions
not physically contiguous

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Basic TLB mappings (2)

- mappings to virtually contiguous regions do not have to be physically contiguous
- easy memory allocation
- almost all user space code does not need physically contiguous memory

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Multiple processes

- each process has its own set of mappings
- the same virtual addresses in two different processes will likely be used to map different physical addresses
 - (page, page frame1) for process 1
 - (page, page frame2) for process 2

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Shared memory (1)

- shared memory is easily implemented with an MMU
- simply map the same **physical frame** into two different **processes**
- the virtual addresses need not be the same
 - for pointers to values inside a shared memory region the virtual addresses must be the same

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Shared memory (2)

- the shared memory region can be mapped to different virtual addresses in each process
- the `mmap()` system call allows the user space process to request a specific virtual address to map the shared memory region
 - if the kernel cannot grant a mapping at this address, `mmap()` returns with failure

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Lazy allocation (1)

- the kernel does not allocate pages immediately that are requested by a process
- the kernel will wait until those pages are actually used
- **lazy allocation** to optimize a performance
 - if the requested pages may not be actually used, then the allocation will never happen

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Lazy allocation (2)

- when memory is requested for allocation, the kernel simply creates a record of the *request* in its **page tables** and then returns (quickly) to the process, without updating the **TLB**
- when that newly-allocated memory is actually accessed, the CPU will generate a **page fault**, because the CPU doesn't know about the mapping (no entry in the **TLB**)

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Lazy allocation (3)

- in the **page fault handler**, the kernel uses its **page tables** to determine that the mapping is valid (from the kernel's point of view) yet unmapped in the **TLB**
- the kernel will allocate a **physical page frame** and update the **TLB** with the new mapping
- the kernel returns from the **exception handler** and user space program can resume

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Lazy allocation (4)

- in a **lazy allocation** case, the **user space program** is never aware that the **page fault** happened
- the **page fault** can only be detected at the time that was lost to handle it
- for processes that are **time-sensitive** pages can be **pre-faulted**, or simply touched, at the start of execution
 - see also `mlock()` and `mlockall()`

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Page tables (1)

- the entries in the TLB are a limited resource
- far more mappings can be made than can exist in the TLB at one time
- the kernel must keep track of all of the mappings at all times
- the kernel stores all these informations in the **page tables**
`stuct_mm` and `vm_area_struct`

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Page tables (2)

- since the TLB can only hold a limited subset of the total mappings for a process, some valid mappings will not have TLB entries
- when these addresses are touched the CPU will generate a **page fault** because the CPU has no knowledge of the mapping only the kernel does

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

- the **page fault handler** will
 - find the appropriate mapping for the offending addresses in the kernel's **page tables**
 - select and remove an existing **TLB entry**
 - create a **TLB entry** for the page containing the address
 - return to the user space process
 - observe the similarities to lazy allocation handling

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Swapping (1)

- when memory utilization is high, the kernel may **swap** some **frames** to disk to free up RAM
- the **MMU** makes this possible
 - the kernel may copy a **frame** to disk and remove its **TLB entry**
 - the **frame** may be reused by another **process**

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Swapping (2)

- when the **frame** is needed again, the CPU will generate a **page fault** because the address is not in the **TLB**
- at a page fault time, the kernel can
 - put the **process** to sleep
 - copy the **frame** from the disk into an **unused frame** in RAM
 - fix the **page table** entry
 - wake the **process**

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

Swapping (3)

- note that when the **page** is restored to RAM, it is not necessarily restored to the same **physical frame** where it originally was located (before being swapped out)
- the **MMU** will use the same **virtual address** though, so the **user space program** will not know the difference
 - this is why **user space memory** cannot typically be used for **DMA**

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

- there are several ways to allocate memory from user space
 - ignoring the familiar `*alloc()` functions, which sit on top of platform methods
- `mmap()` can be used directly to allocate and map pages
- `brk()` / `sbrk()` can be used to increase the heap size

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

mmap()

- `mmap()` is the standard way to allocate large amounts of memory from user space
- while `mmap()` is often used for files, the `MAP_ANONYMOUS` flag causes `mmap()` to allocate normal memory for the process
- the `MAP_SHARED` flag can make the allocated pages sharable with other processes

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

brk() / sbrk() (1)

- brk() sets the top of the program break
- this is the top of the data segment but inspection of kernel/sys.c shows it separates from the data segment
- this in effect increases the size of the heap
- sbrk() increases the program break rather than setting it directly

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

brk() / sbrk() (2)

- lazy allocation
- see `mm/mmap.c` for `do_brk()`
- `do_brk()` is implemented similar to `mmap()`
- modify the page tables for the new area
- wait for the page fault
- optionally, `do_brk()` can pre-fault the new area and allocate it
see `mlock(2)` to control this behavior

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

High level implementation

- `malloc()` and `calloc()` will use either `brk()` or `mmap()` depending on the requested allocation size
 - small allocations use `brk()`
 - large allocation use `mmap()`
 - see `mallopt(3)` and the `M_MMAP_THRESHOLD` parameter to control this behavior

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf

- Stack expansion
- if a process accesses memory beyond its stack, the CPU will trigger a page fault
- the page fault handler detects the address is just beyond the stack, and allocates a new page to extend the stack
- the new page will not be physically contiguous with the rest of the stack
- see `__do_page_fault()` in `/arch/arm/mm/fault.c`

https://elinux.org/images/b/b0/Introduction_to_Memory_Management_in_Linux.pdf