

Virtual Memory with Linux *

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1 Looking at Memory with Linux

(Specifics of Linux are not part of learning objectives. However, the following illustrates shared memory, and the pseudo-filesystem `/proc` will be revisited in other presentations.)

1.1 Linux Kernel: `/proc/<pid>/`

- `/proc` is a pseudo-filesystem
 - See <https://man7.org/linux/man-pages/man5/proc.5.html>
 - * (Specific to Linux kernel; incomplete or missing elsewhere)
 - “Pseudo”: Look and feel of any other filesystem
 - * Subdirectories and files
 - * However, files are no “real” files but meta-data
 - Interface to internal **kernel data structures**
 - * One subdirectory per process ID
 - * OS identifies process by integer number
 - * Here and elsewhere, `<pid>` is meant as **placeholder** for such a number

1.1.1 Video about `/proc`

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The video shows some aspects of the `/proc` filesystem related to memory management, which are described in more abstract form on subsequent slides.

1.1.2 Drawing about `/proc`

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1.1.3 Drawing about man pages

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(See HTML presentation instead.)

1.2 Linux Kernel Memory Interface

- Memory allocation (and much more) visible under `/proc/<pid>`
- E.g.:
 - `/proc/<pid>/pagemap`: One 64-bit value per virtual page
 - * Mapping to RAM or swap area
 - `/proc/<pid>/maps`: Mapped memory regions
 - `/proc/<pid>/smaps`: Memory usage for mapped regions
- Notice: Memory regions include **shared** libraries that are used by lots of processes

1.3 GNU/Linux Reporting: smem

- User space tool to read `smaps` files: `smem`
 - See <https://linoxide.com/memory-usage-reporting-smem/>
- Terminology
 - **Virtual set size (VSS)**: Size of virtual address space
 - **Resident set size (RSS)**: Allocated main memory
 - * Standard notion, yet overestimates memory usage as lots of memory is shared between processes
 - Shared memory is added to the RSS of every sharing process
 - **Unique set size (USS)**: memory allocated exclusively to process
 - * That much would be returned upon process’ termination
 - **Proportional set size (PSS)**: USS plus “fair share” of shared pages
 - * If page shared by 5 processes, each gets a fifth of a page added to its PSS

1.3.1 Sample smem Output

```
$ smem -c "pid command uss pss rss vss" -P "bash|xinit|emacs"
PID Command                USS    PSS    RSS    VSS
 765 /usr/bin/xinit /etc/X11/Xse    220    285    2084   15952
1390 /bin/bash -c libreoffice5.3    240    510    2936   13188
 826 /bin/bash /usr/bin/qubes-se    256    524    3008   13204
 750 -su -c /usr/bin/xinit /etc/    316    587    3368   21636
1251 bash                    4864   5136   7900   26024
2288 /usr/bin/python /usr/bin/sm    5272   6035   9432   24688
1145 emacs                    90876  93224  106568 662768
```

1.3.2 Sample smem Graph

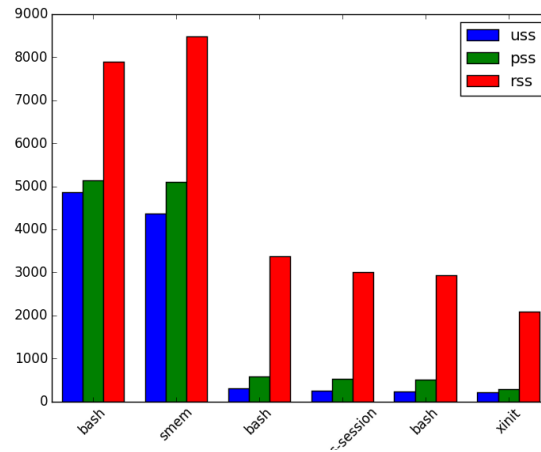


Figure 1: `smem --bar pid -c "uss pss rss" -P "bash|xinit"` (“Screenshot of smem” under CC0 1.0; from GitLab)

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