

## CHAPTER 12

# Security

SECURITY PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE in distributed systems. All parts of a Jini djinn, which consists of clients, services, and lookup services, can be subjected to attack by hostile agents. You could trust everyone, but the large number of attacks that are made on all sorts of systems by both skilled and unskilled people doesn't make this a reasonable approach. The Jini security model is based on the JDK 1.2 security system, and all components of a Jini system use the JDK 1.2 security mechanisms. This can be tricky to set up, and it is looked at in detail in this chapter.

### Getting Going with No Security

Security for Jini is based on the JDK 1.2 security model, which makes use of a `SecurityManager` to grant or deny access to resources. All potentially dangerous requests, such as opening a file, starting a process, or establishing a network connection, are all passed to a `SecurityManager`. This manager will make decisions based on a security policy (which should have been established for that application) and either allow or deny the request.

A few of the examples given so far in this book may work fine without a security manager, but most will require an appropriate security manager to be in place. The major requirement in most examples is for the RMI runtime to be able to download class files to instantiate proxy objects. This can be enabled by installing an `RMI SecurityManager`. Installing a security manager may be done by including this statement in your code:

```
System.setSecurityManager(new RMI SecurityManager());
```

This should be done before any network-related calls, and is often done in the `main()` method or in a constructor for the application class.

The security manager will need to make use of a security policy. This is typically given in policy files, which are kept in default locations or are specified to the Java runtime. If `policy.all` is a policy file in the current directory, then invoking the runtime with this statement

```
java -Djava.security.policy="policy.all" ...
```

will load the contents of the policy file.

A totally permissive policy file can contain the following:

```
grant {  
    permission java.security.AllPermission "", "";  
};
```

This will allow all permissions, and should never be used outside of a test and development environment—and moreover, one that is insulated from other potentially untrusted machines. (Standalone is good here!)

The big advantage of this permissive policy file is that it gets you going on the rest of Jini without worrying about security issues while you are grappling with other problems!

## Why AllPermission Is Bad

Granting all permissions to everyone is a very trusting act in the potentially hostile world of the Internet. Not everyone is “mister nice guy.” The client is vulnerable to attack because it is downloading code that satisfies a request for a service, and it then executes that code. There are really no checks that the downloaded code is a genuine service: the downloaded code has to implement the requested interface and maybe satisfy conditions on associated `Entry` objects. If it passes these conditions, then it can do anything.

For example, a client asking for a simple file classifier could end up getting this hostile object:

```
package hostile;  
  
import common.MIMETYPE;  
import common.FileClassifier;  
  
/**  
 * HostileFileClassifier1.java  
 */  
  
public class HostileFileClassifier1 implements FileClassifier {  
  
    public MIMETYPE getMIMETYPE(String fileName) {  
        if (java.io.File.pathSeparator.equals("/")) {  
            // Unix - don't uncomment the next line!  
            // Runtime.getRuntime().exec("/bin/rm -rf /");  
        } else {  
            // DOS - don't uncomment the next line!        }  
    }  
}
```

```

        // Runtime.getRuntime().exec("format c: /u");
    }
    return null;
}

public HostileFileClassifier1() {
    // empty
}

} // HostileFileClassifier1

```

**This object would be exported from a hostile service to run completely in any client unfortunate enough to download it.**

**It is not necessary to actually call a method on the downloaded object—the mere act of downloading can do the damage if the object overrides the deserialization method:**

```

package hostile;

import common.MIMETYPE;
import common.FileClassifier;

/**
 * HostileFileClassifier2.java
 */

public class HostileFileClassifier2 implements FileClassifier,
    java.io.Externalizable {

    public MIMETYPE getMIMETYPE(String fileName) {
        return null;
    }

    public void readExternal(java.io.ObjectInput in) {
        if (java.io.File.pathSeparator.equals("/")) {
            // Unix - don't uncomment the next line!
            // Runtime.getRuntime().exec("/bin/rm -rf /");
        } else {
            // DOS - don't uncomment the next line!
            // Runtime.getRuntime().exec("format c: /u");
        }
    }
}

```

```

public void writeExternal(java.io.ObjectOutput out)
    throws java.io.IOException{
    out.writeObject(this);
}

public HostileFileClassifier2() {
    // empty
}

} // HostileFileClassifier2

```

The two classes above assume that clients will make requests for the implementation of a particular interface, and this means that the attacker would require some knowledge of the clients it is attacking (that they will ask for this interface). At the moment, there are no standard interfaces, so this may not be a feasible way of attacking many clients. As interfaces such as those for a printer become specified and widely used, however, attacks based on hostile implementations of services may become more common.

## Removing AllPermission

Setting the security access to `AllPermission` is easy and removes all possible security issues that may hinder development of a Jini application. However, it leaves your system open, so you must start using a more rigorous security policy at some stage—hopefully before others have damaged your system. The problem with moving away from this open policy is that permissions are additive rather than subtractive. That is, you can't take permissions away from `AllPermission`; you have to start with an empty permission set and add to that.

Not giving enough permission can result in at least three situations when you try to access something:

- A security-related exception can be thrown. This is comparatively easy to deal with, because the exception will tell you what permission is being denied. You can then decide if you should be granting this permission or not. Of course, this should be caught during testing, not when the application is deployed!
- A security-related exception can be thrown but caught by some library object, which attempts to handle it. This happens within the multicast lookup methods, which make multicast requests. If this permission is denied, it will be retried several times before giving up. This leads to a cumulative time delay before anything else can happen. The application may be able to continue, and it will just suffer this time delay.

- A security-related exception can be thrown but caught by some library object and ignored. The application may be unable to continue in any rational way after this, and may just appear to hang. This may happen if network access is requested but denied, and then a thread waits for messages that can never arrive. Or it may just get stuck in a loop...

The first two cases will occur if permissions are turned off for the service providers, such as in the `rmi.FileClassifierServer` of Chapter 9. The third occurs for the client `client.TestFileClassifier` of Chapter 8 if insufficient permissions are given.

There is a `java.security.debug` system property that can be set to print information about various types of access to the security mechanisms. This can be used with a slack security policy to find out exactly what permissions are being granted. Then, with the screws tightened, you can see where permission is being denied. An appropriate value for this property is `access`, as in

```
java -Djava.security.debug=access ...
```

For example, running `client.TestFileClassifier` with few permissions granted may result in a trace such as the following:

```
...
access: access allowed (java.util.PropertyPermission socksProxyHost read)
access: access allowed (java.net.SocketPermission 127.0.0.1:1174 accept,resolve)
access: access denied (java.net.SocketPermission 130.102.176.249:1024
accept,resolve)
access: access denied (java.net.SocketPermission 130.102.176.249:1025
accept,resolve)
access: access denied (java.net.SocketPermission 130.102.176.249:1027
accept,resolve)
...
```

The denied access is an attempt to make a socket accept or resolve request on my laptop (IP address 130.102.176.249), probably for RMI-related sockets. Since the client just sits there indefinitely making this request on one random port after another, this permission needs to be opened up, because the client otherwise appears to just hang.

## Jini with Protection

The safest way for a Jini client or service to be part of a Jini federation is through abstinence: that is, for it to refuse to take part. This doesn't get you very far in

populating a federation, though. The JDK 1.2 security model offers a number of ways in which more permissive activity may take place:

- Grant permission only for certain activities, such as socket access at various levels on particular ports, or access to certain files for reading, writing, or execution.

```
grant {
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.85", "connect,accept";
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "*.edu.au:80", "connect";
}
```

- Grant access only to particular hosts, subdomains, or domains.

```
grant codebase "http://sunshade.dstc.edu.au/classes/" {
    permission java.security.AllPermission "", "";
}
```

- Require digital signatures to be attached to code.

```
grant signedBy "sysadmin" {
    permission java.security.AllPermission "", "";
}
```

For any particular security access, you will need to decide which of these options is appropriate. This will depend on the overall security policy for your organization, and if your organization doesn't have such a policy that you can refer to, then you certainly shouldn't be exposing your systems to the Internet (or to anyone within the organization, either)!

## Service Requirements

In order to partake in a Jini federation, a service must become sufficiently visible. The service needs to find a service locator before it can advertise its services, and as explained in Chapter 3, this can be by unicast to particular locations or by multicast.

Unicast discovery does not need any particular permissions to be set. The discovery can be done without any policy file.

For the multicast case, the service must have `DiscoveryPermission` for each group that it is trying to join. For all groups, the asterisk (\*) wildcard can be used. So, to join all groups, the permission granted should be as follows:

```
permission net.jini.discovery.DiscoveryPermission "*";
```

For example, to join the printers and toasters groups, the permission would be this:

```
permission net.jini.discovery.DiscoveryPermission,
    "printers, toasters";
```

Once this permission is given, the service will make a multicast broadcast on 224.0.1.84. This particular address is used by Jini for broadcasts and should be used in your policy files. Socket permission for these requests and announcements must be given as follows:

```
permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.84", "connect,accept";
permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.85", "connect,accept";
```

The service may export a `UnicastRemoteObject`, which will need to communicate back to the server, and so the server will need to listen on a port for these remote object requests. Ports are numbered from 1 to 65,000, and the default constructor will assign a random port (greater than 1,024) for this. If desired, this port may be specified by other constructors. This will require further socket permissions, such as the following, to accept connections on any port above 1024 from the localhost or any computer in the `dstc.edu.au` domain:

```
permission java.net.SocketPermission "localhost:1024-", "connect,accept";
permission java.net.SocketPermission "/*.dstc.edu.au:1024-", "connect,accept";
```

The reason Jini uses a port greater than 1024 is because the use of lower port numbers is restricted on Unix systems.

A number of parameters may be set by preferences, such as `net.jini.discovery.ttl`. It does no harm to allow the Jini system to look for these parameters, and this may be allowed by including code like the following in the policy file:

```
permission java.util.PropertyPermission "net.jini.discovery.*", "read";
```

A fairly minimal policy file suitable for a service exporting an RMI object could then be as follows:

```
grant {
    permission net.jini.discovery.DiscoveryPermission "*";
    // multicast request address
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.85", "connect,accept";
    // multicast announcement address
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.84", "connect,accept";
```

```

// RMI connections
permission java.net.SocketPermission "*.canberra.edu.au:1024-",
"connect,accept";
permission java.net.SocketPermission "130.102.176.249:1024-", "connect,accept";
permission java.net.SocketPermission "127.0.0.1:1024-", "connect,accept";

// reading parameters
// like net.jini.discovery.debug!
permission java.util.PropertyPermission "net.jini.discovery.*", "read";
};

```

## Client Requirements

The client is most at risk in the Jini environment. The service exports objects; the lookup locator stores objects, but does not “bring them to life” or execute any of their methods; but the client brings an external object into its address space and runs it, giving it all of the permissions of a process running in an operating system. The object will run under the permissions of a particular user in a particular directory, with user access to the local file system and network. It could destroy files, make network connections to undesirable sites (or desirable, depending on your tastes!) and download images from them, start processes to send obnoxious mail to anyone in your address book, and generally make a mess of your electronic identity!

A client using multicast search to find service locators will need to grant discovery permission and multicast announcement permission, just like the service:

```

permission net.jini.discovery.DiscoveryPermission "*";
permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.84", "connect,accept";
permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.85", "connect,accept";

```

**RMI connections on random ports may also be needed:**

```

permission java.net.SocketPermission "*.dstc.edu.au:1024-", "connect,accept"

```

In addition, class definitions will probably need to be uploaded so that services can actually run in the client. This is the most serious risk area for the client, as the code contained in these class definitions will be run in the client, and any errors or malicious code will have their effect because of this. The client view of the different levels of trust is shown in Figure 12-1. The client is the most likely candidate to require signed trust certificates since it has the highest trust requirement of the components of a Jini system.

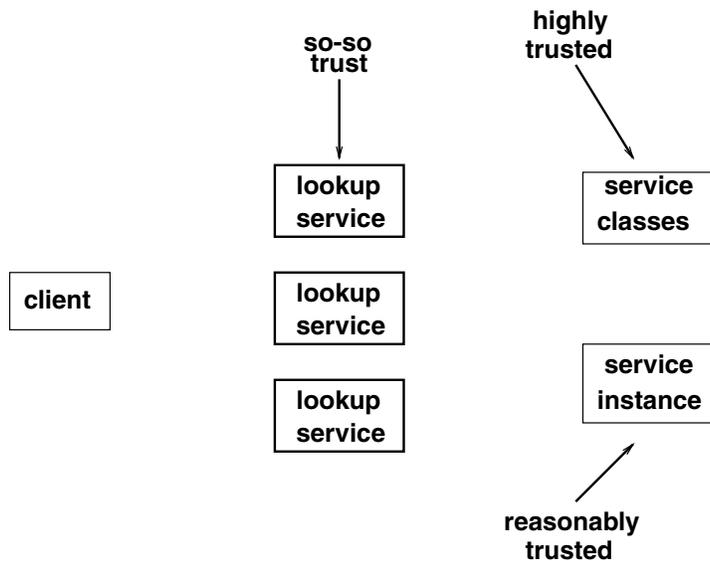


Figure 12-1. Trust levels of the client

Many services will just make use of whatever HTTP server is running on their system, and this will probably be on port 80. Permission to connect on this port can be granted with the following statements:

```
permission java.net.SocketPermission "127.0.0.1:80", "connect,accept";
permission java.net.SocketPermission "*.dstc.edu.au:80", "connect,accept";
```

However, while this will allow code to be downloaded on port 80, it may not block some malicious attempts. Any user can start an HTTP server on any port (Windows) or above 1024 (Unix). A service can then set its codebase to whatever port the HTTP server is using. Perhaps these other ports should be blocked, but unfortunately, RMI uses random ports, so these ports need to be open.

So, it is probably not possible to close all holes for hostile code to be downloaded to a client. What you need is a second stage defense: given that hostile code may reach you, set the JDK security so that hostile (or just buggy) code cannot perform harmful actions in the client.

A fairly minimal policy file suitable for a client could then be as follows:

```
grant {
    permission net.jini.discovery.DiscoveryPermission "*";

    // multicast request address
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.85", "connect,accept";
    // multicast announcement address
```

```

permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.84", "connect,accept";

// RMI connections
// DANGER
// HTTP connections - this is where external code may come in - careful!!!
permission java.net.SocketPermission "127.0.0.1:1024-", "connect,accept";
permission java.net.SocketPermission "*.canberra.edu.au:1024-",
"connect,accept";
permission java.net.SocketPermission "130.102.176.249:1024-", "connect,accept";

// DANGER
// HTTP connections - this is where external code may come in - careful!!!
permission java.net.SocketPermission "127.0.0.1:80", "connect,accept";
permission java.net.SocketPermission "*.dstc.edu.au:80", "connect,accept";

// reading parameters
// like net.jini.discovery.debug!
permission java.util.PropertyPermission "net.jini.discovery.*", "read";

};

```

## RMI Parameters

A service is specified by an interface. In many cases, an RMI proxy will be delivered to the client that implements this interface. Depending on the interface, this can be used by the client to attack the service. The `FileClassifier` interface is safe, but in Chapter 14 we will look at how a client can upload a new MIME type to a service, and this extended interface exposes a service to attack.

This is the relevant method from the `MutableFileClassifier` interface of Chapter 14:

```

public void addType(String suffix, MIMEType type)
    throws java.rmi.RemoteException;

```

This method allows a client to pass an object of type `MIMEType` up to the service, where it will presumably try to add it to a list of existing MIME types. The `MIMEType` class is an ordinary class, not an interface. Nevertheless, it can be subclassed, and this subclass can make an attack as described in the second section of this chapter.

This particular attack can be avoided by ensuring that the parameters to any method call in an interface are all final classes. If the `MIMEType` class was defined by

```

public final class MIMEType {...}

```

then it would not be possible to subclass it. No attack could be made by a subclass, since no subclass could be made! There aren't enough Jini services defined yet to know whether making all parameters `final` is a good enough solution.

## ServiceRegistrar

Services will transfer objects to be run within clients. This chapter has so far been concerned with the security policies that will allow this and the restrictions that may need to be in place. The major protection for clients at the moment is that there are no standardized service interfaces, so attackers do not yet know what hostile objects to write.

A lookup service, on the other hand, exports an object that implements `ServiceRegistrar`. It does not use the same mechanism as a service would to get its code into a client. Instead, the lookup service replies directly to unicast connections with a registrar object, or responds to multicast requests by establishing a unicast connection to the requester and again sending a registrar. The mechanism is different, but it is clearly documented in the Jini specifications and it is quite easy to write an application that performs at least this much of the discovery protocols.

The end result of lookup discovery is that the lookup service will have downloaded registrar objects. The registrar objects run in both clients and services—they both need to find lookup services. The `ServiceRegistrar` interface is standardized by the Jini specification, so it is fairly easy to write a hostile lookup service that can attack both clients and services.

While it is unlikely that anyone will knowingly make a unicast connection to a hostile lookup service, someone might get tricked into it. There are already some quite unscrupulous Web sites that will offer “free” services on producing a credit card (to the user's later cost). There is every probability that such sites will try to entice Jini clients if they see a profit in doing so. Also, anyone with access to the network and within broadcast range of clients and services (i.e., on your local network) can start lookup services that will be found by multicast discovery.

The only real counter to this attack is to require that all connections that can result in downloaded code should be covered by digital certificates, so that all downloaded code must be signed. This covers all possible ports, since an HTTP server can be started on any port on a Windows machine. The objects that are downloaded in the Sun implementation of the lookup service, `reggie`, are all in `reggie-dl.jar`. This is not signed by any certificates. If you are worried about an attack through this route, you should sign this file, as well as the jar files of any services you wish to use.

## Transaction Manager and Other Activatable Services

The Jini distribution includes a transaction manager called `mahalo`. This uses the new activation methods of RMI in JDK 1.2. Without worrying about any other arguments, the call to run this transaction manager is

```
java -jar mahalo.jar
```

(assuming the jar file is in the CLASSPATH). The transaction manager is a Jini service and will need class definitions to be uploaded to clients. The class files are in `mahalo-dl.jar`, and will come from an HTTP server. The location of this jar file is specified in the first command-line argument. For example, to access it from the HTTP server on my laptop, `jannote`, I would issue the following command:

```
java -jar mahalo.jar http://jannote.dstc.edu.au/mahalo-dl.jar
```

The transaction manager is a Jini service, and so should set a security policy. This security policy should allow the transaction manager to register with a lookup service, and allow client access to it. In addition, the transaction manager needs to maintain state about transactions in permanent storage. To do this, it needs access to the file system, and since it has a security manager installed, this access needs to be granted explicitly. This is done using the normal `java.security.policy` property:

```
java -Djava.security.policy=policy.txn \  
    -jar mahalo.jar http://jannote.dstc.edu.au/mahalo-dl.jar
```

This will allow the service to be registered and uploaded, and also will allow access to the file system.

A suitable policy to set up the permissions discussed earlier and grant file system access could be as follows:

```
grant {  
    // rmid wants this  
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "127.0.0.1:1098", "connect,resolve";  
  
    // other RMI calls want these, too  
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "127.0.0.1:1024-", "connect,resolve";  
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "130.102.176.153:1024-",  
"connect,lve";  
  
    // access to transaction manager log files  
    permission java.io.FilePermission "/tmp/mahalo_log", "read,write";  
    permission java.io.FilePermission "/tmp/mahalo_log/-", "read,write,delete";
```

```

// properties used by transaction manager
permission java.util.PropertyPermission "com.sun.jini.mahalo.managerName",
"read";
permission java.util.PropertyPermission "com.sun.jini.use.registry", "read";
};

```

The new activation system of JDK 1.2 takes a little getting used to and causes confusion to Jini newcomers, because Sun implementations of major Jini services (such as mahalo) use activation. An *activatable service* like mahalo hands over responsibility for execution to a third party, an activation service. This activation service is usually rmid, and is used by reggie as well as mahalo.

A service (e.g., mahalo) starts, registers itself with this third-party service (e.g., rmid), and then exits. The third-party service (rmid) is responsible for fielding calls to the service (mahalo), and either awakening it or restoring it from scratch to handle the call. There is a subtlety here: the service (mahalo) begins execution in one JVM, but promptly delegates its execution to this third-party service (rmid) running in a different JVM! Thus, there are two JVMs involved in running an activatable service, and so there are two security policies—one for each of the JVMs.

The first security policy is used when the service is first started (say by a user). This uses the command line argument `-Djava.security.policy=...` and is used to register the service (mahalo) with the activation service (rmid). This startup service then exits. Some time later, the activation service will try to restart the registered service (mahalo) and will need to know the security policy to apply to it. This second security policy must be passed from the original startup through to the activation service, and this is specified in an additional command-line argument, `policy.actvn`.

```

java -Djava.security.policy=policy.txn -jar mahalo.jar \
    http://jannote.dstc.edu.au/mahalo-dl.jar \
    policy.actvn

```

The policy file just discussed is suitable for starting the mahalo service. A suitable activation policy for actually *running* the mahalo service from the activation server could be as follows:

```

grant {
    // rmid wants this
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "127.0.0.1:1098", "connect,resolve";

    // other RMI calls want these, too
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "127.0.0.1:1024-", "connect,resolve";
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "130.102.176.153:1024-",
"connect,resolve";
};

```

```

// access the transaction manager log files
permission java.io.FilePermission "/tmp/mahalo_log", "read,write";
permission java.io.FilePermission "/tmp/mahalo_log/-", "read,write,delete";

// properties used by transaction manager
permission java.util.PropertyPermission "com.sun.jini.mahalo.managerName",
";
permission java.util.PropertyPermission "com.sun.jini.use.registry", "read";

// needed for activation
permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.84", "connect,accept,resolve";
permission java.io.FilePermission "/tmp/mahalo_log/-", "read";
permission java.util.PropertyPermission "com.sun.jini.thread.debug", "read";
permission java.lang.RuntimePermission "modifyThreadGroup";
permission java.lang.RuntimePermission "modifyThread";

// for downloading mahalo-dl.jar from HTTP server
permission java.net.SocketPermission "*:8080", "connect,accept,resolve";
permission net.jini.discovery.DiscoveryPermission "*";
};

```

## rmid

An activatable service runs within a JVM started by `rmid`. It does so with the same user identity as `rmid`, so if `rmid` is run by, say, the superuser `root` on a Unix system, then all activatable services will run with that same user ID, `root`. This is a security flaw, as any user on that system can write and start an activatable service, and then write and run a client that makes calls on the service. This is a way to run programs with superuser privileges from an arbitrary user.

My own machine has only a few users, and all of them I trust not to write deliberately malicious programs (and right now, I am the only one who can write Jini services). However, most people may not be in such a fortunate position. Consequently, `rmid` should be run in such a way that even if it is attacked, it will not be able to do any damage.

On Unix, there are two ways of reducing the risk:

- Run `rmid` as a harmless user, such as user `nobody`. This can be done by changing `rmid` to be `setuid` to this user. Note that the program `rmid` in the Java `bin` directory is actually a shell script that eventually calls a program such as `bin/i386/green_threads/rmid`, and it is this program that needs to have the `setuid` bit set.

- Use the `chroot` mechanism to run `rmid` in a subdirectory that appears to be the top-level directory `'/'`. This will make all other files invisible to `rmid`.

**NOTE** `setuid` is the description of the Unix mechanism for changing the apparent user of a program. Unix performs this change when the `setuid` bit is set in the file permissions of the program. This can be added by the Unix command `chmod +s program`.

Since the attack can only come from someone who already has an account on the machine, the `setuid` method is probably good enough, and it is certainly simpler to set up than `chroot`.

On an NT system, `rmid` should be set up so that it only runs under general user access rights.

### *rmid and JDK 1.3*

The security problems of the last section have been partly addressed by a tighter security mechanism introduced in JDK 1.3. These restrict what activatable services can do by using a security mechanism that is under the control of whoever starts `rmid`. This means that there has to be cooperation between the person who starts `rmid` and the person who starts an activatable service that will use `rmid`.

The simplest mechanism is to just turn the new security system off. This was discussed briefly in Chapter 3, and it means running `rmid` with an additional argument:

```
rmid -J-Dsun.rmi.activation.execPolicy=none
```

All that `rmid` then checks is that any activatable service that registers with it is started on the same machine as `rmid`. This is the weak security mechanism in the JDK 1.2 version of `rmid`, which assumes that users on the same machine pose no security risks.

The default new mechanism can also be set explicitly:

```
rmid -J-Dsun.rmi.activation.execPolicy=default
```

This requires an additional security policy file that will be used by `rmid`, and the location of this policy file is also given on the command line for `rmid`. For example,

the following command will start `rmid` using the new default mechanism with the policy file set to `/usr/local/jini1_1/rmid.policy`:

```
rmid -Djava.security.policy=/usr/local/jini1_1/rmid.policy
```

The policy file used by `rmid` is a standard JDK 1.2 policy file, and it grants permissions to do various things. For `rmid`, the main permission that has to be granted is to use the various options of the activation commands. Granting option permissions is done using the `com.sun.rmi.rmid.ExecOptionPermission` permission.

For example, `reggie` is an activatable service. To run this on my system, I use this command:

```
java -jar /usr/local/jini1_1/lib/reggie.jar \  
      http://jannote.dstc.edu.au:8080/reggie-dl.jar \  
      /usr/local/jini1_1/example/lookup/policy \  
      /tmp/reggie_log public
```

To run this with the JDK 1.3 `rmid`, I need to place the following in the security policy file:

```
grant {  
    permission com.sun.rmi.rmid.ExecOptionPermission  
        "/usr/local/jini1_1/lib/reggie.jar";  
    permission com.sun.rmi.rmid.ExecOptionPermission  
        "-Djava.rmi.server.codebase=http://jannote.dstc.edu.au:8080/reggie-dl.jar";  
    permission com.sun.rmi.rmid.ExecOptionPermission  
        "-Djava.security.policy=/usr/local/jini1_1/example/lookup/policy";  
    permission com.sun.rmi.rmid.ExecOptionPermission "-cp";  
};
```

The permissions granted are, in turn:

1. The jar file that contains the main application class. This distinguishes `reggie` from other activation services.
2. The HTTP address of the class files used in the implementation.
3. The security policy file used by `reggie`.

Unless all three match, `rmid` will not run `reggie`. Wildcards can be used, but this will reduce the amount of security that `rmid` has over the activatable services it looks after.

You may have noticed that there is a mismatch between the command I type to get `reggie` running and the contents of the policy file. Not all of the command

line arguments I type are in the policy file. For example, what has happened to the `/tmp/reggie_log` argument?

Well, arguments like `/usr/local/jini1_1/example/lookup/policy` are property overrides that are defined to the JVM in the form `-D=`, as shown here:

```
-Djava.security.policy=/usr/local/jini1_1/example/lookup/policy
```

On the other hand, the argument `/tmp/reggie_log` is just a simple command line argument and not a property override at all. The property overrides need to go in the policy file, but the ordinary command line arguments do not.

So do you have to go through each argument in turn, to decide if it is a property? No, that would be too tedious. Instead, you start with an empty policy file, start `rmid`, and then start an activatable service such as `reggie`. Generally, this will fail with an exception message such as this:

```
Unable to invoke by reflection, the method:
com.sun.jini.reggie.CreateLookup.create.
An exception was thrown by the invoked method.
java.lang.reflect.InvocationTargetException: java.rmi.activation.ActivateFailedException: failed to activate object; nested exception is:
    java.security.AccessControlException: access denied (com.sun.rmi.rmid.ExecOptionPermission -Djava.security.policy=/usr/local/jini1_1/example/lookup/policy)
java.security.AccessControlException: access denied (com.sun.rmi.rmid.ExecOptionPermission -Djava.security.policy=/usr/local/jini1_1/example/lookup/policy)
```

In this exception message is the phrase “`com.sun.rmi.rmid.ExecOptionPermission -Djava.security.policy=/usr/local/jini1_1/example/lookup/policy`”. The person who wants to run `reggie` must communicate this information to the person who controls `rmid` so that they can place this information in the `rmid` policy file.

You’ll need to go through this process a few times to build up the complete set of permissions for `reggie`. That’s tedious too ... but there isn’t any other way. The document <http://developer.java.sun.com/developer/products/jini/execpolicy.html> gives policy files for the Jini services `reggie`, `mahalo`, and `FrontEndSpace`.

There is a third choice in mechanisms, and that is to specify an object that will be used to establish the security access, but that is beyond the scope of this chapter. It is discussed in the JDK 1.3 documentation for `rmid`.

## Being Paranoid

Jini applications download and execute code from other sources:

- Both clients and services download `ServiceRegistrar` objects from lookup services. They then call methods such as `lookup()` and `register()`.
- A client will download services and execute whatever methods are defined in the interface.
- A remote listener will call the `notify()` method of foreign code.

In a safe environment where all code can be trusted, no safeguards need to be employed. However, most environments carry some kind of risk from hostile agents. An attack will consist of a hostile agent implementing one of the known interfaces (of `ServiceRegistrar`, of a well-known service such as the transaction manager, or of `RemoteEventListener`) with code that does not implement the implied “contract” of the interface but instead tries to perform malicious acts. These acts may not even be deliberately hostile; most programmers make at least some errors, and these errors may result in risky behavior.

There are all sorts of malicious acts that can be performed. Hostile code can simply terminate the application, but the code can perform actions such as read sensitive files, alter sensitive files, forge messages to other applications, perform denial of service attacks such as filling the screen with useless windows, and so on.

It doesn't take much reading about security issues to instill a strong sense of paranoia, and possible overreaction to security threats. If you can trust everyone on your local network (which you are already doing if you run a number of common network services such as NFS), then the techniques discussed in this section are probably overkill. If you can't, then paranoia may be a good frame of mind to be in!

### *Protection Domains*

The Java 1.2 security model is based on the traditional idea of “protection domains.” In Java, a protection domain is associated with classes based on their `CodeSource`, which consists of the URL from which the class file was loaded (the codebase), plus a set of digital certificates used to sign the class files. For example, the class files for the `LookupLocator` class are in the file `jini-core.jar` (in the `lib` directory of the Jini distribution). This class has a protection domain associated with the `CodeSource` for `jini-core.jar`. (All of the classes in `jini-core.jar` will belong to this same protection domain.)

Information about protection domains and code sources can be found by code such as this, which can be placed anywhere after the `registrar` object is found:

```
java.security.ProtectionDomain domain = registrar.  
                                     getClass().getProtectionDomain();  
java.security.CodeSource codeSource = domain.getCodeSource();
```

Information about the digital signatures attached to code can be found by code like this, which can also be placed anywhere after the `registrar` object is found:

```
Object [] signers = registrar.getClass().getSigners();  
if (signers == null)  
    System.out.println("No signers");  
} else {  
    System.out.println("Signers");  
    for (int m = 0; m < signers.length; m++)  
        System.out.println(signers[m].toString());  
}
```

By default, no class files or jar files have digital signatures attached. Digital signatures can be created using `keytool` (part of the standard Java distribution). These signatures are stored in a keystore. From there, they can be used to sign classes and jar files using `jarsigner`, exported to other keystores, and generally be spread around. Certificates don't mean anything unless you believe that they really do guarantee that they refer to the "real" person, and certificate authorities, such as VeriSign, provide validation techniques for this.

This description has been horribly brief and is mainly intended as a reminder for those who already understand this stuff. If you want to experiment, you can do as I did and just create certificates as needed, using `keytool`, although there was no independent authority to verify them. A good explanation of this topic is given by Bill Venners at <http://www.artima.com/insidejvm/ed2/ch03Security1.html>.

## Signing Standard Files

None of the Java files in the standard distribution are signed. None of the files in the Jini distribution are signed either. For most of these it probably won't matter, since they are local files.

However, all of the Jini jar files ending in `-dl.jar` are downloaded to clients and services across the network and are Sun implementations of "well-known" interfaces. For example, the `ServiceRegistrar` object that you get from the discovery process (described in Chapter 3) has its class files defined in `reggie-dl.jar`, as a `com.sun.jini.reggie.RegistrarImpl_Stub` object. Hostile code implementing the

`ServiceRegistrar` interface can be written quite easily. If there is the possibility that hostile versions of lookup services (or other Sun-supplied services) may be set running on your network, then you should only accept implementations of `ServiceRegistrar` if they are signed by an authority you trust.

### *Signing Other Services*

Interfaces to services such as printers will eventually be decided upon, and will become “well known.” There should be no need to sign these interface files for security reasons, but an authority may wish to sign them for, say, copyright reasons. Any implementations of these interfaces are a different matter. Just like the cases above, these implementation class files will come to client machines from other machines on the local or even remote networks. These are the files that can have malicious implementations. If this is a possibility, you should only accept implementations of the interfaces if they are signed by an authority you trust.

### *Permissions*

Permissions are granted to protection domains based on their codesource, which consists of the codebase and a set of digital signatures. In the Sun implementation, this is done in the policy files, by `grant` blocks:

```
grant codeBase "url" signedBy "signer" {  
    ...  
}
```

When code executes, it belongs to the protection domains of all classes on the call stack above it. So, for example, when the `ServiceRegistration` object in the `complete.FileClassifierServer` is executing the `register()` method, the following classes are on the call stack:

- The `com.sun.jini.reggie.RegistrarImpl_Stub` class from `reggie-dl.jar`
- The `complete.FileClassifierServer` class, from the call `discovered()`
- Core Jini classes that have called the `discovered()` method
- Classes from the Java system core that are running the application

The permissions for executing code are generally the intersection of all the permissions of the protection domains it is running in. Classes in the Java system

core grant all permissions, but if you restrict the permissions granted to your own application code to core Jini classes, or to code that comes across the network, you restrict what an executing method can do.

For example, if multicast request permission is not granted to the Jini core classes, then discovery cannot take place. This permission needs to be granted to the application code and also to the Jini core classes.

It may not be immediately apparent which protection domains are active at any point. For example, in the earlier call of

```
registrar.getClass().getProtectionDomain()
```

I fell into the assumption that the `reggie-dl.jar` domain was active because the method was called on the `registrar` object. But it wasn't. While the `getClass()` call is made on the `registrar`, this completes and returns a `Class` object so that the call is made on this object, which by then is just running in the three domains: the system, the application, and the core Jini classes domains, but not the `reggie-dl.jar` domain.

There are two exceptions to the intersection rule. The first is that the RMI security manager grants `SocketPermission` to connect back to the codebase host for remote classes. The second is that methods may call the `AccessController.doPrivileged()` method. This essentially prunes the class call stack, discarding all classes below this one for the duration of the call, and it is done to allow permissions based on this class's methods, even though the permissions may not be granted by classes earlier in the call chain. This allows some methods to continue to work even though the application has not granted the permission, and it means that the application does not have to generally grant permissions required only by a small subset of code.

For example, the `Socket` class needs access to file permissions in order to allow methods such as `getOutputStream()` to function. By using `doPrivileged()`, the class can limit the "security breakout" to particular methods in a controlled manner. If you are running with security access debugging turned on, this explains how a large number of accesses are granted even though the application has not given many of the permissions.

## *Putting It Together*

Adding all the bits of information presented in this chapter together leads to security policy files that restrict possible attacks:

1. Grant permissions to application code based on the codesource. If you suspect these classes could be tampered with, sign them as well.

2. Grant permission to Jini core classes based on the codesource. These may be signed if need be.
3. Grant permission to downloaded code only if it is signed by an authority you trust. Even then, grant only the minimum permission needed to perform the service's task.
4. Don't grant any other permissions to other code.

A policy file based on these principles might look like this:

```
keystore "file:/home/jan/.keystore", "JKS";

// Permissions for downloaded classes
grant signedBy "Jan" {
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "137.92.11.117:1024-",
"connect,accept,resolve";
};

// Permissions for the Jini classes
grant codeBase "file:/home/jan/tmpdir/jini1_1/lib/-" signedBy "Jini" {
    // The Jini classes shouldn't require more than these

    permission java.util.PropertyPermission "net.jini.discovery.*", "read";
    permission net.jini.discovery.DiscoveryPermission "*";
    // multicast request address
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.85", "connect,accept";
    // multicast announcement address
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.84", "connect,accept";

    // RMI and HTTP
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "127.0.0.1:1024-", "connect,accept";
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "*.canberra.edu.au:1024-",
"connect,accept";
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "137.92.11.*:1024-",
"connect,accept,resolve";
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "130.102.176.*:1024-",
"connect,accept,resolve";
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "130.102.176.249:1024-",
"connect,accept,resolve";
    // permission java.net.SocketPermission "137.92.11.117:1024-",
"connect,accept,resolve";

    // debugging
```

```

    permission java.lang.RuntimePermission "getProtectionDomain";
};

// Permissions for the application classes
grant codeBase "file:/home/jan/projects/jini/doc/-" {
    permission java.util.PropertyPermission "net.jini.discovery.*", "read";
    permission net.jini.discovery.DiscoveryPermission "*";
    // multicast request address
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.85", "connect,accept";
    // multicast announcement address
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "224.0.1.84", "connect,accept";

    // RMI and HTTP
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "127.0.0.1:1024-", "connect,accept";
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "*canberra.edu.au:1024-",
"connect,accept";
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "137.92.11.*:1024-",
"connect,accept,resolve";
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "130.102.176.*:1024-",
"connect,accept,resolve";
    permission java.net.SocketPermission "130.102.176.249:1024-",
"connect,accept,resolve";
    // permission java.net.SocketPermission "137.92.11.117:1024-",
"connect,accept,resolve";

    // debugging
    permission java.lang.RuntimePermission "getProtectionDomain";

    // Add in any file, etc, permissions needed by the application classes
};

```

## Summary

You have to pay attention to security when running in a distributed environment, and Jini enforces security by using the JDK 1.2 security model. This chapter has considered the range of security mechanisms possible, from turning security off through to paranoiac mode. It should be noted that this does not cover issues such as encryption or non-repudiation. These are still under development for later versions of Jini.

