Java Security

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Why Java?

◆ meets a need
  – users want to browse
  – dynamic, interesting pages

◆ contrast to ActiveX
  – Java risk: hostile code breaks sandbox
  – ActiveX risk: user trusts too many programs
Java Security Basics

- complexity the root of problems
  - usual development pressures
- depends on type-safe language
- most breaches have been due to breakdowns in type safety
- denial of service not addressed
- overall, security has improved, but problems remain
Language Soundness

- type safety depends on language semantics
  - semantic problems lead to security breaches
- need definition and proofs
  - strains the limits of formal methods
- some problems found already
  - dynamic linking attacks
Future Issues

- remote invocation and persistent objects
- garbage collection and finalization
- flexible security mechanisms
- complexity of JIT compilation
- generally, new features harbor bugs