**CS 370: OPERATING SYSTEMS**

[**THREADS**]

On Threads, Processes, Stacks and Heaps

Armed with a stack

A program counter

And registers to boot

A thread’s ready to work

When the thread’s done?

There goes its program counter

And its stack too

Poof!

A process is done

Only when all its threads are done

If the process ain’t done …

The shared heap’s still around

Shrideep Pallickara

Computer Science

Colorado State University

---

Frequently asked questions from the previous class survey

- Say the main thread creates threads T1 and T2. When those threads are running, is the main thread running?
- When writing threads, do you specify the number of cores to use?
- How can threads access a document: but three separate processes cannot?
- Hyperthreading and its relation to execution of threads
Topics covered in this lecture

- User- and kernel-level threads
- Thread Models
- Thread Libraries

Going about writing multithreaded programs  [1/2]

- The key idea is to write a concurrent program — one with many simultaneous activities
  - As a set of sequential streams of execution, or threads, that interact and share results in very precise ways
- Subdivide functionality into multiple separate & concurrent tasks
- Threads let us define a set of tasks that run concurrently while the code for each task is sequential
Going about writing multithreaded programs [2/2]

- Managing data manipulated by tasks
  - Split to run on separate cores. BUT
  - Examine data dependencies between the tasks

- Threaded programs on many core systems have many different execution paths
  - Which may or may not reveal bugs
  - Testing and debugging is inherently harder

User-level threads
User-level threads: Overview

- User space
- Kernel space
- Process
- Thread
- Runtime System
- Program counters
- Thread table
- Process table

User threads are invisible to the kernel and have low overhead

- Compete among themselves for resources allocated to their encapsulating process
- Scheduled by a thread runtime system that is part of the process code
- Programs link to a special library
  - Each library function is enclosed by a jacket
  - Jacket function calls thread runtime to do thread management
    - Before (and possibly after) calling jacketed library function
User level thread libraries: Managing blocking calls

- **Replace** potentially blocking calls with non-blocking ones
- If a call does not block, the runtime invokes it
- If the call *may block*
  1. Place thread on a list of *waiting* threads
  2. Add call to list of actions to *try later*
  3. Pick another thread to run
- ALL control is **invisible** to user and OS

Disadvantages of the user level threads model [1/2]

- Assumes that the runtime will *eventually regain* control, this is thwarted by:
  - CPU bound threads
  - Thread that *rarely* performs library calls …
    - Runtime can’t regain control to schedule other threads
- Programmer must avoid *lockout* situations
  - Force CPU-bound thread to *yield* control
Disadvantages of the user level threads model [2/2]

- Can only share processor resources allocated to encapsulating process
  - Limits available parallelism
Kernel-level threads: Overview

- Process
- Thread
- User space
- Kernel space
- Kernel
- Thread table
- Process table
- Program counters

Kernel threads

- Kernel is aware of kernel-level threads as **schedulable entities**
  - Kernel maintains a thread table to keep track of all threads in the system

- **Compete system wide** for processor resources
  - Can take advantage of multiple processors
Kernel threads:
Management costs

- Scheduling is **almost as expensive** as processes
  - Synchronization and data sharing **less expensive** than processes
- More expensive to manage than user-level threads

Hybrid thread models

- Write programs in terms of user-level threads
- Specify number of schedulable entities associated with process
  - **Mapping at runtime** to achieve parallelism
- Level of user-control over mapping
  - Implementation dependent
The Many-to-One threading model

- User threads
- Kernel thread

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
Computer Science Department

SLIDES CREATED BY: SHRIDEEP PALLICKARA
Many-to-One Model maps many user-level threads to 1 kernel thread

- Thread management done by thread library in **user-space**
- What happens when one thread makes a **blocking system call**?
  - The entire process blocks!

Only 1 thread can access kernel at a time
- Multiple threads **unable** to run in parallel on multi-processor/core system
- E.g.: Solaris Green threads, GNU Portable threads
The One-to-One threading model

One-to-One Model:
Maps each user thread to a kernel thread

- More **concurrency**
  - Another thread can continue to run, when a thread invokes a blocking system call

- Threads run in **parallel** on multiprocessors
One-to-One Model:
Maps each user thread to a kernel thread

- Disadvantages:
  - There is an **overhead** for kernel thread creation
  - Multiple user threads can degrade application performance

- Supported by:
  - Linux
  - Windows family: NT/XP/2000/Vista/7/8/10/11
  - Solaris 9 and up

---

Many-to-Many threading Model:
2-level is a variant of this

- Many-to-Many
- Two-level
Many-to-Many model

- **Multiplex** many user-level threads on a smaller number of kernel threads
- Number of kernel threads may be specific to
  - Particular application
  - Particular machine
- Supported in
  - IRIX, HP-US, and Solaris (prior to version 9)

A comparison of the three models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Many-to-one</th>
<th>One-to-One</th>
<th>Many-to-Many</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>True Concurrency</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During blocking</td>
<td>Process Blocks</td>
<td>Process DOES NOT block</td>
<td>Process DOES NOT block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>system call?</td>
<td>Kernel thread already exists</td>
<td>Kernel thread creation overhead</td>
<td>Kernel threads available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caveat</td>
<td>Use system calls (blocking) with care</td>
<td>Don’t create too many threads</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thread libraries provide an API for managing threads

- Includes functions for:
  1. Thread creation and destruction
  2. Enforcement of mutual exclusion
  3. Conditional waiting

- Runtime system to manage threads
  - Users are not aware of this
User level thread libraries

- No kernel support
- Library code & data structures reside in user space
- Invoking a library function **does not** result in a system call
  - Local function call in user space

Kernel level thread libraries

- Library code & data structures in kernel space
- Invoking library function typically **results in a system call**
Thread libraries provide an API for creating and managing threads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library code and data structures</th>
<th>User level library</th>
<th>Kernel level library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reside in user space</td>
<td>Reside in kernel space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can invocation of library function result in system call?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS support</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dominant thread libraries (1)

- POSIX pthreads
  - Extends POSIX standard (IEEE 1003.1c)
  - Provided as user- or kernel-level library
  - Linux, Mac OS X, Solaris, BSD

- Win32 thread library
  - Kernel-level library
Dominant thread libraries (2)

- Java threading API
  - Implemented using thread library on host system
    - On Windows: Threads use Win32 API
    - UNIX/Linux: Uses pthreads
Java threads example

- We will use a thread to perform summation of a non-negative integer

\[ \text{sum} = \sum_{i=0}^{N} i \]

- If \( N=5 \), we compute the sum of 0 through 5
  - \( 0 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 = 15 \)

Java

- Designed from the ground-up to support **concurrent** programming
  - Basic concurrency support in the language and class libraries

- Java 1.5 (or 5) and higher
  - Powerful high-level concurrency APIs
JVMs harness the thread models of the host OS

- Windows/Linux have a one-to-one model
  - So a thread maps to a kernel thread

- Tru64 UNIX uses the many-to-many model
  - Java threads mapped accordingly

- Solaris
  - Initially, used Green Threads $\rightarrow$ many-to-one
  - Version 9 onwards: one-to-one model

Creating Threads in Java

1. Create a new class derived from Thread
   - Override its run() method

2. More commonly used: Runnable interface
   - Has 1 method run()
   - Create new Thread class by passing a Runnable object to its constructor

3. The Executor interface (java.util.concurrent)
   - Has 1 method execute()
Java Threads: Interrupts

- **Invoke** `interrupt()` **on the Thread**
- **Threads must support their own interruption**
- **An interruptible thread** needs to
  1. Catch the `InterruptedException`
     - Methods such as `sleep()` throw this, and are designed to cancel the operation and return
  2. Periodically invoke `Thread.interrupted()` to see if it has been interrupted

Java Threads: `join`

- **If thread object** `threadA` **is currently executing**
- **Another thread can call** `threadA.join()`
  - Causes current thread to pause execution until `threadA` terminates
- **Variants of** `join()`
  - Specify a waiting period
Using Java Threads

```java
class Sum {
    private int sum;

    public int get() {
        return sum;
    }

    public void set(int sum) {
        this.sum = sum;
    }
}
```

Using Java Threads

```java
class Summation implements Runnable {
    private int upper;
    private Sum sumValue;

    public Summation(int upper, Sum sumValue) {
        this.upper = upper;
        this.sumValue = sumValue;
    }

    public void run() {
        int sum = 0;
        for (int i = 0; i <= upper; i++)
            sum += i;
        sumValue.set(sum);
    }
}
```
Using Java Threads

```java
public class Driver {
    public static void main(String[] args) {
        Sum sumObject = new Sum();
        int upper = Integer.parseInt(args[0]);

        Thread worker = new Thread(new Summation(upper, sumObject));
        worker.start();
        try {
            worker.join();
        } catch (InterruptedException ie) {
            ie.printStackTrace()
        }
        System.out.println("The sum of " + upper + " is " +
                              sumObject.get());
    }
}
```

POSIX THREADS
This is a specification for thread behavior, not an implementation.
POSIX thread management functions:
Return 0 if successful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSIX function</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pthread_cancel</td>
<td>Terminate another thread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pthread_create</td>
<td>Create a thread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pthread_detach</td>
<td>Set thread to release resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pthread_exit</td>
<td>Exit a thread without exiting process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pthread_kill</td>
<td>Send a signal to a thread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pthread_join</td>
<td>Wait for a thread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pthread_self</td>
<td>Find out own thread ID</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Functions return a non-ZERO error code
Do NOT set errno

POSIX: Thread creation

`pthread_create()`

- Automatically makes the thread runnable *without* a start operation
- Takes 3 parameters:
  1. Points to ID of newly created thread
  2. Attributes for the thread
     - Stack size, scheduling information, etc.
  3. Name of function that the thread calls when it begins execution
POSIX: Detaching and Joining

- When a thread exits it does not release its resources
  - Unless it is a detached thread

- `pthread_detach()`
  - Sets internal options to specify that storage for thread can be reclaimed when it exits
  - 1 parameter: Thread ID of the thread to detach

POSIX: Thread joins

- Threads that are not detached are joinable
- Undetached threads don’t release resources until
  - Another thread calls `pthread_join` for them
  - Process exits

- `pthread_join`
  - Takes ID of the thread to wait for
  - Suspends calling thread till target terminates
  - Similar to `waitpid` at the process level
  - `pthread_join(pthread_self())`?
    - Deadlock!
POSIX: Exiting and cancellation

- If a process calls `exit`, all threads terminate
- Call to `pthread_exit` causes only the calling thread to terminate
- Threads can force other threads to return through a cancellation mechanism
  - `pthread_cancel`: takes thread ID of target
  - Depends on `type` and `state` of thread

More info on `pthread_cancel`

- **State:** `pthread_setcancelstate` to change state
  - `PTHREAD_CANCEL_ENABLE`
  - `PTHREAD_CANCEL_DISABLE`
    - Cancellation requests are held pending
- **Cancellation type allows thread to control when to exit**
  - `PTHREAD_CANCELASYNCHRONOUS`
    - Any time
  - `PTHREAD_CANCELDIFFERED`
    - Only at specified cancellation points
Using Pthreads (1)

```c
#include <pthread.h>
#include <stdio.h>

int sum; /* this data is shared by the thread(s) */

void *runner(void *param); /* the thread */
```

Using Pthreads (2)

```c
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    pthread_t tid;       pthread_attr_t attr;
    /* get the default attributes */
    pthread_attr_init(&attr);

    /* create the thread */
    pthread_create(&tid, &attr, runner, argv[1]);

    /* now wait for the thread to exit */
    pthread_join(tid, NULL);

    printf("sum = %d\n",sum);
}
```
Using Pthreads (3)

```c
/**
 * The thread will begin control in this function
 */
void *runner(void *param)
{
    int i, upper = atoi(param);
    sum = 0;

    if (upper > 0) {
        for (i = 1; i <= upper; i++)
            sum += i;
    }

    pthread_exit(0);
}
```

Win32 Threads

- CreateThread
  - Security Information, size of stack, flag (start in suspended state?)
- WaitForSingleObject
- CloseHandle
The contents of this slide-set are based on the following references