Process management

- This module begins a series of topics on processes, threads, and synchronization
  - this is the most important part of the class
  - there definitely will be several questions on these topics on the midterm
- Today: processes and process management
  - what are the OS units of execution?
  - how are they represented inside the OS?
  - how is the CPU scheduled across processes?
  - what are the possible execution states of a process?
    - and how does the system move between them?

The process

- The process is the OS’s abstraction for execution
  - the unit of execution
  - the unit of scheduling
  - the dynamic (active) execution context
  - compared with program: static, just a bunch of bytes
- Process is often called a job, task, or sequential process
  - a sequential process is a program in execution
    - defines the instruction-at-a-time execution of a program

What’s in a process?

- A process consists of (at least):
  - an address space
  - the code for the running program
  - the data for the running program
  - an execution stack and stack pointer (SP)
  - traces state of procedure calls made
  - the program counter (PC), indicating the next instruction
  - general-purpose processor registers and their values
  - a set of OS resources
    - open files, network connections, sound channels, ...
  - In other words, it’s all the stuff you need to run the program
    - or to re-start it, if it’s interrupted at some point

The process control block

- There’s a data structure called the process control block (PCB) that holds all this stuff
  - The PCB is identified by an integer process ID (PID)
- OS keeps all of a process’s hardware execution state in the PCB when the process isn’t running
  - PC, SP, registers, etc.
  - when a process is unscheduled, the state is transferred out of the hardware into the PCB
- Note: It’s natural to think that there must be some esoteric techniques being used
  - fancy data structures that you’d never think of yourself
    - Wrong!

Process states

- Each process has an execution state, which indicates what it is currently doing
  - ready: waiting to be assigned to CPU
  - running: executing on the CPU
  - waiting: waiting for an event, e.g., I/O
    - cannot make progress until event happens
- As a process executes, it moves from state to state
  - UNIX: run ps, STAT column shows current state
  - which state is a process in most of the time?
States of a process

- running
- ready
- blocked
- exception
- interrupt
- dispatch
- interrupt (unschedule)

The PCB revisited

- The PCB is a data structure with many, many fields:
  - process ID (PID)
  - execution state
  - program counter, stack pointer, registers
  - memory management info
  - UNIX username of owner
  - scheduling priority
  - accounting info
  - pointers into state queues
- In Linux:
  - defined in `task_struct` (include/linux/sched.h)
  - over 95 fields!!!

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PCBs and hardware state

- When a process is running, its hardware state is inside the CPU
  - PC, SP, registers
  - CPU contains current values
- When the OS stops running a process (puts it in the waiting state), it saves the registers’ values in the PCB
  - when the OS puts the process in the running state, it loads the hardware registers from the values in that process’s PCB
- The act of switching the CPU from one process to another is called a context switch
  - timesharing systems may do 100s or 1000s of switches/sec.
  - takes about 5 microseconds on today’s hardware

State queues

- The OS maintains a collection of queues that represent the state of all processes in the system
  - typically one queue for each state
    - e.g., ready, waiting, ...
    - each PCB is queued onto a state queue according to the current state of the process it represents
    - as a process changes state, its PCB is unlinked from one queue, and linked onto another
- Once again, this is just as straightforward as it sounds! The PCBs are moved between queues, which are represented as linked lists. There is no magic!

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PCBs and state queues

- PCBs are data structures
  - dynamically allocated inside OS memory
- When a process is created:
  - OS allocates a PCB for it
  - OS initializes PCB
  - OS puts PCB on the correct queue
- As a process computes:
  - OS moves its PCB from queue to queue
- When a process is terminated:
  - OS deallocates its PCB

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Process creation

• One process can create another process
  – creator is called the parent
  – created process is called the child
  – UNIX: do `ps`, look for PPID field
  – what creates the first process, and when?
• In some systems, parent defines or donates resources and privileges for its children
  – UNIX: child inherits parent’s UserID field, etc.
• When child is created, parent may either wait for it to finish, or may continue in parallel, or both!

UNIX process creation

• UNIX process creation through `fork()` system call
  – creates and initializes a new PCB
  – creates a new address space
  – initializes new address space with a copy of the entire contents of the address space of the parent
  – initializes kernel resources of new process with resources of parent (e.g., open files)
  – places new PCB on the ready queue
• the `fork()` system call “returns twice”
  – once into the parent, and once into the child
  – returns the child’s PID to the parent
  – returns 0 to the child
• `fork()` = “clone me”

Testparent – use of `fork()`

```c
int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    char *name = argv[0];
    int child_pid = fork();
    if (child_pid == 0) {
        printf("Child of %s is %d\n", name, child_pid);
        return 0;
    } else {
        printf("My child is %d\n", child_pid);
        return 0;
    }
}
```

testparent output

```
spinlock% gcc -o testparent testparent.c
spinlock% ./testparent
My child is 486
Child of testparent is 0
spinlock% ./testparent
Child of testparent is 0
My child is 486
```

Exec vs. fork

• So how do we start a new program, instead of just forking the old program?
  – the `exec()` system call
  – `int exec(char *prog, char **argv)`
  – `exec()` = stops the current process
  – loads program ‘prog’ into the address space
  – initializes hardware context, args for new program
  – places PCB onto ready queue
  – note: does not create a new process!

UNIX shells

```c
int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    while (1) {
        char *cmd = get_next_command();
        int child_pid = fork();
        if (child_pid == 0) {
            manipulate STDIN/STDOUT/STDERR fd’s exec(cmd);
            panic("exec failed!");
        } else {
            wait(child_pid);
        }
    }
}
```
A process’s address space

- Stack (dynamic allocated mem)
- Heap (dynamic allocated mem)
- Static data (data segment)
- Code (text segment)

PC -> SP

0xFFFFFFFF

0x00000000

address space