

CSE 451: Operating Systems

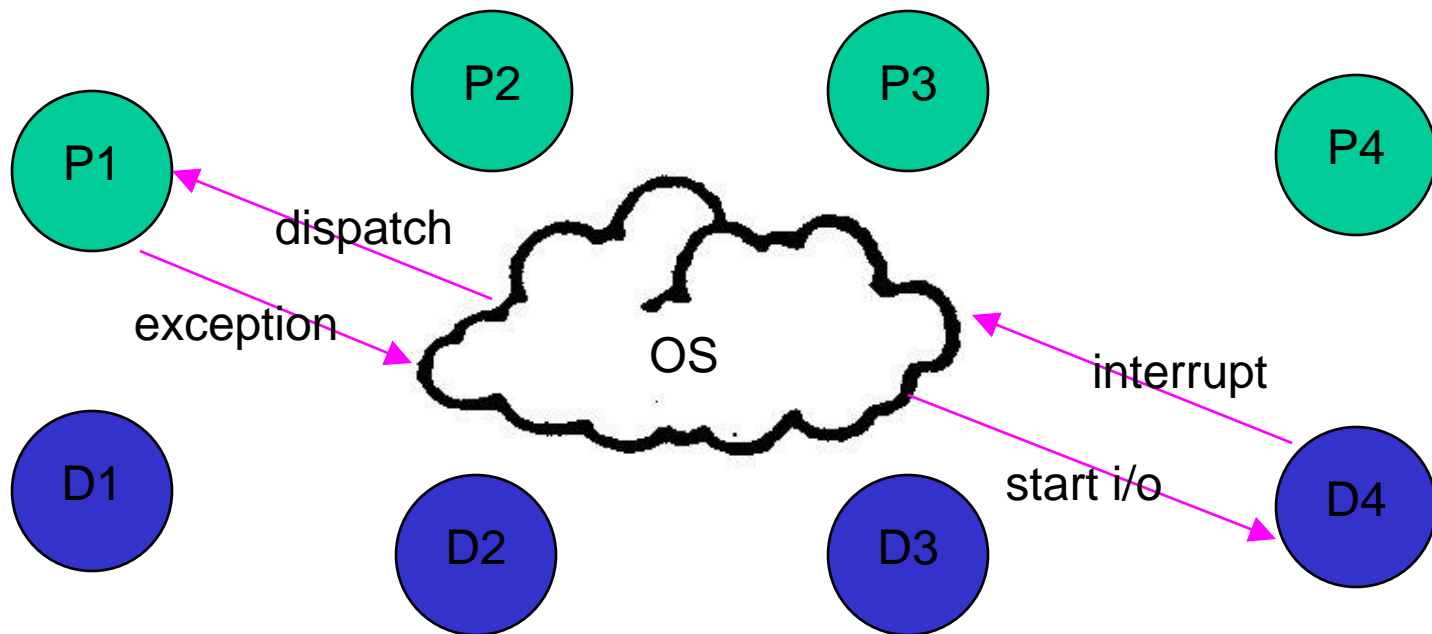
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OS Structural Overview

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OS structure

- The OS sits between application programs and the hardware
 - it mediates access and abstracts away ugliness
 - programs request services via exceptions (**traps** or **faults**)
 - devices request attention via **interrupts**



Major OS components

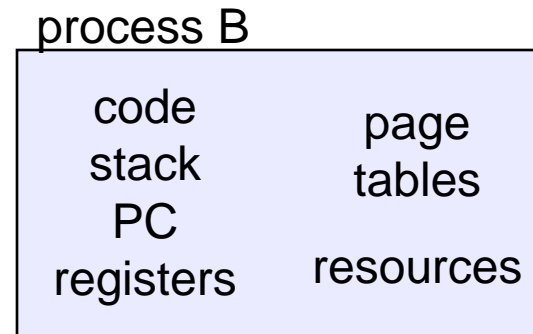
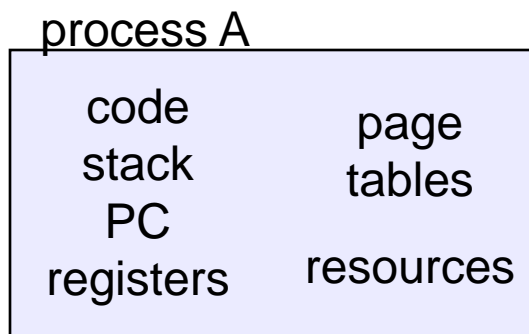
- Processes
- Memory
- I/O
- Secondary storage
- File systems
- Protection
- Security
- Networking
- Accounting
- Shells (command interpreter, or OS UI)
- GUI

Process management

- An OS executes many kinds of activities:
 - users' programs
 - batch jobs or scripts
 - system programs
 - print spoolers, name servers, file servers, network daemons, ...
- Each of these activities is encapsulated in a **process**
 - a process includes the execution **context**
 - PC, registers, VM, OS resources (e.g., open files), etc...
 - plus the program itself (code and data)
 - the OS's process module manages these processes
 - creation, destruction, scheduling, ...

Program/processor/process

- Note that a **program** is totally passive
 - just bytes on a disk that encode instructions to be run
- A **process** is an instance of a program being executed by a (real or virtual) processor
 - at any instant, there may be many processes running copies of the same program (e.g., an editor); each process is separate and (usually) independent
 - Use TASKMGR to list all processes



Process operations

- The OS provides the following kinds operations on processes (i.e., the process abstraction interface):
 - create a process
 - delete a process
 - suspend a process
 - resume a process
 - clone a process
 - inter-process communication
 - inter-process synchronization
 - create/delete a child process (subprocess)

Memory management

- The primary memory (or RAM) is the directly accessed storage for the CPU
 - programs must be stored in memory to execute
 - memory access is fast (e.g., 60 ns to load/store)
 - but *most* memory doesn't survive power failures
- OS must:
 - allocate memory space for programs (explicitly and implicitly)
 - deallocate space when needed by rest of system
 - maintain mappings from physical to virtual memory
 - through **page tables** (hardware support feature)
 - decide how much memory to allocate to each process
 - a policy decision
 - decide when to remove a process from memory
 - also policy

I/O

- A big chunk of the OS kernel deals with I/O
 - hundreds of thousands of lines in NT
- The OS provides a standard interface between programs (user or system) and devices
 - file system (disk), sockets (network), frame buffer (video)
- **Device drivers** are the routines that interact with specific device types
 - **encapsulates** device-specific knowledge
 - e.g., how to initialize a device, how to request I/O, how to handle interrupts or errors
 - examples: SCSI device drivers, Ethernet card drivers, video card drivers, sound card drivers, ...
- Note: Windows has ~35,000 device drivers!

Secondary storage

- Secondary storage (disk, tape) is persistent memory
 - often magnetic media, survives power failures (hopefully)
 - This can be both good and bad
- Routines that interact with disks are typically at a very low level in the OS
 - used by many components (file system, VM, ...)
 - handle scheduling of disk operations, head movement, error handling, and often management of space on disks
 - disk controllers are continually getting smarter
- Usually independent of file system
 - although there may be cooperation
 - file system knowledge of device details can help optimize performance
 - e.g., place related files close together on disk

File systems

- Secondary storage devices are crude and awkward
 - e.g., “write 4096 byte block to sector 12”
- File system: a convenient abstraction
 - defines logical objects like **files** and **directories**
 - hides details about where on disk files live
 - as well as operations on objects like read and write
 - read/write byte ranges instead of blocks
- A **file** is the basic unit of long-term storage
 - file = named collection of persistent information
- A **directory** is just a special kind of file
 - directory = named file that contains names of other files and metadata about those files (e.g., file size)
- Note: Sequential byte stream is only one possibility!

File system operations

- The file system interface defines standard operations:
 - file (or directory) creation and deletion
 - manipulation of files and directories (read, write, extend, rename, protect)
 - copy
 - lock
- File systems also provide higher level services
 - accounting and quotas
 - (sometimes) backup
 - (sometimes) indexing or search
 - (sometimes) file versioning

Protection

- Protection is a general mechanism used throughout the OS
 - all resources needed to be protected
 - memory
 - processes
 - files
 - devices
 - CPU time
 - ...
 - protection mechanisms help to detect and contain unintentional errors, as well as preventing malicious destruction

Command interpreter (shell)

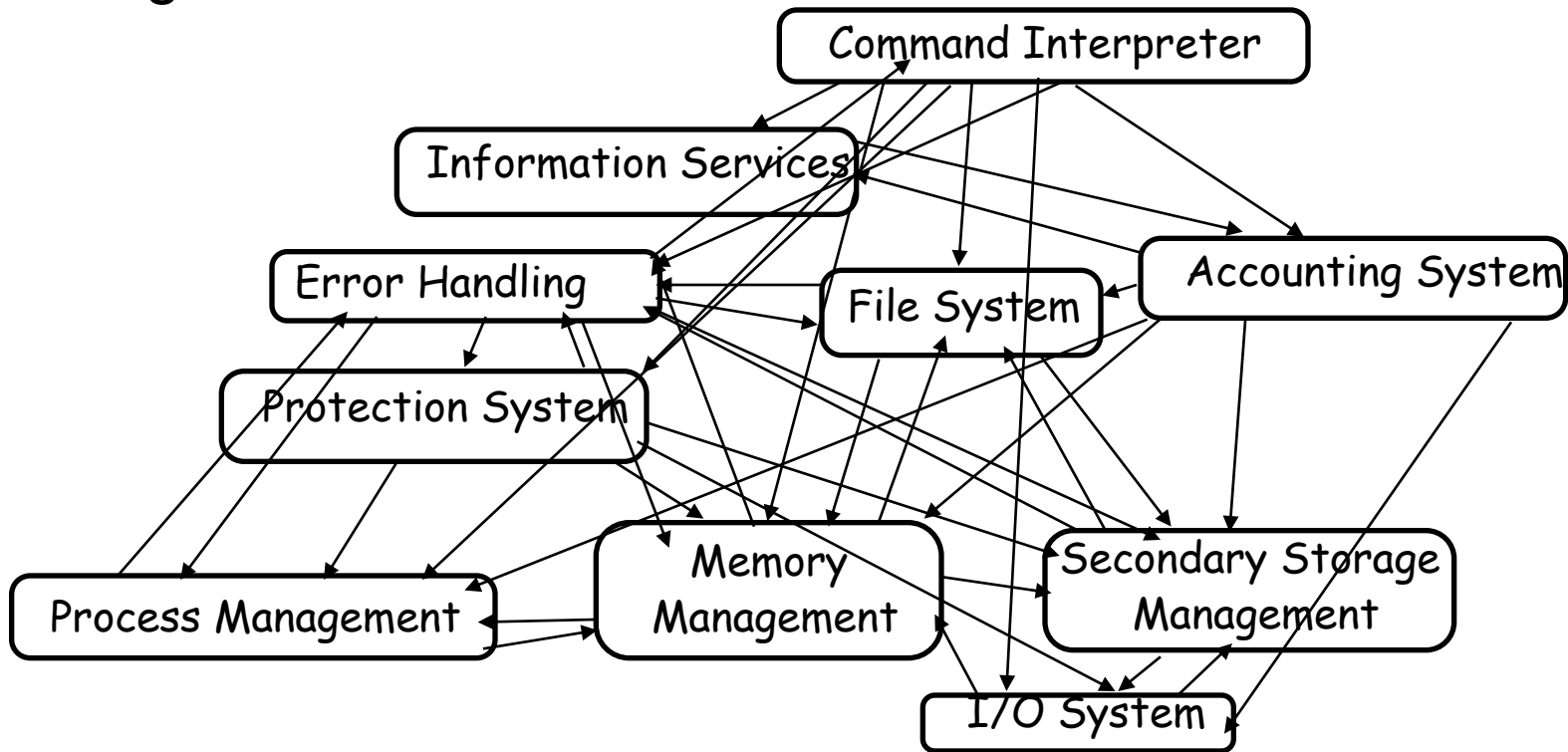
- A particular program that handles the interpretation of users' commands and helps to manage processes
 - user input may be from keyboard (command-line interface), from script files, or from the mouse (GUIs)
 - allows users to launch and control new programs
- On some systems, command interpreter may be a standard part of the OS (e.g., MS DOS, Apple II)
- On others, it's just non-privileged code that provides an interface to the user
 - e.g., bash/csh/tcsh/zsh on UNIX
- On others, there may be no command language
 - e.g., MacOS

Accounting

- Keeps track of resource usage
 - both to enforce quotas
 - “you’re over your disk space limit”
 - or to produce bills
 - timeshared computers like mainframes
 - hosted services

OS structure

- It's not always clear how to stitch OS modules together:

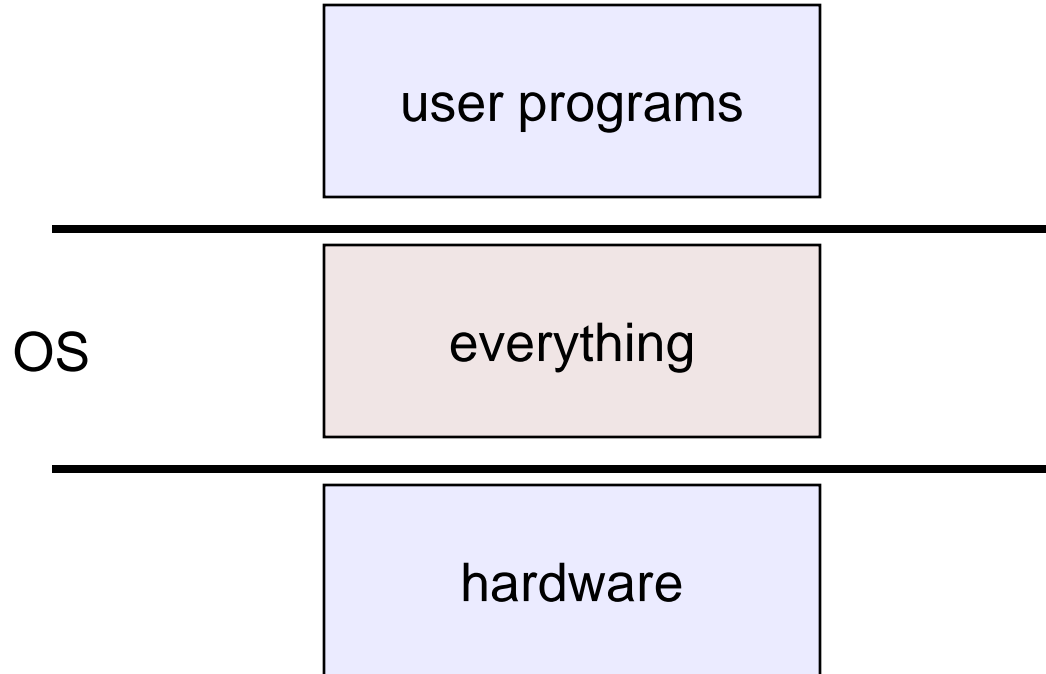


OS structure

- An OS consists of all of these components, plus:
 - many other components
 - system programs (privileged and non-privileged)
 - e.g., bootstrap code, the init program, ...
- Major issue:
 - how do we organize all this?
 - what are all of the code modules, and where do they exist?
 - how do they cooperate?
- Massive software engineering and design problem
 - design a large, complex program that:
 - performs well, is reliable, is extensible, is backwards compatible, ...

Early structure: Monolithic

- Traditionally, OS's (like UNIX) were built as a monolithic entity:



Monolithic design

- Major advantage:
 - cost of module interactions is low (procedure call)
- Disadvantages:
 - hard to understand
 - hard to modify
 - unreliable (no isolation between system modules)
 - hard to maintain
- What is the alternative?
 - find a way to organize the OS in order to simplify its design and implementation

Layering

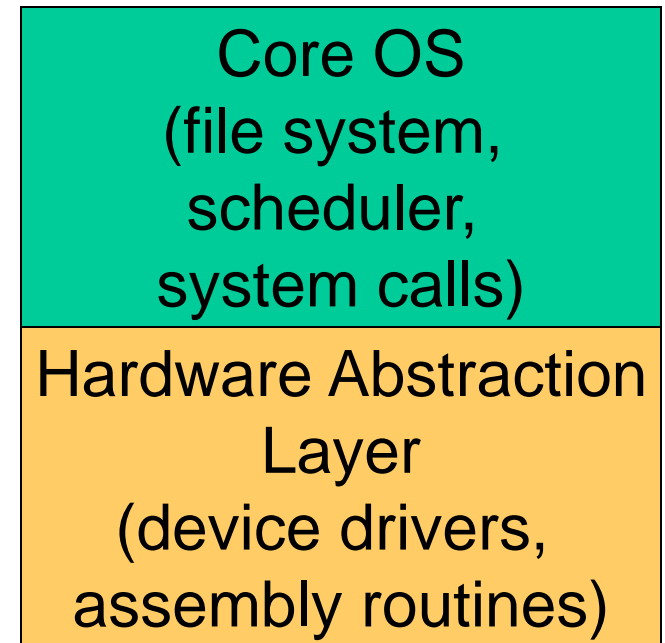
- The traditional approach is layering
 - implement OS as a set of layers
 - each layer presents an enhanced ‘virtual machine’ to the layer above
- The first description of this approach was Dijkstra’s THE system
 - Layer 5: **Job Managers** (Execute users’ programs)
 - Layer 4: **Device Managers** (Handle devices and provide buffering)
 - Layer 3: **Console Manager** (Implements virtual consoles)
 - Layer 2: **Page Manager** (Implements virtual memories for each process)
 - Layer 1: **Kernel** (Implements a virtual processor for each process)
 - Layer 0: **Hardware**
- Each layer can be tested and verified independently

Problems with layering

- Imposes hierarchical structure
 - but real systems are more complex:
 - file system requires VM services (buffers)
 - VM would like to use files for its backing store
 - strict layering isn't flexible enough
- Poor performance
 - each layer crossing has **overhead** associated with it
- Disjunction between model and reality
 - systems modeled as layers, but not really built that way

Hardware Abstraction Layer

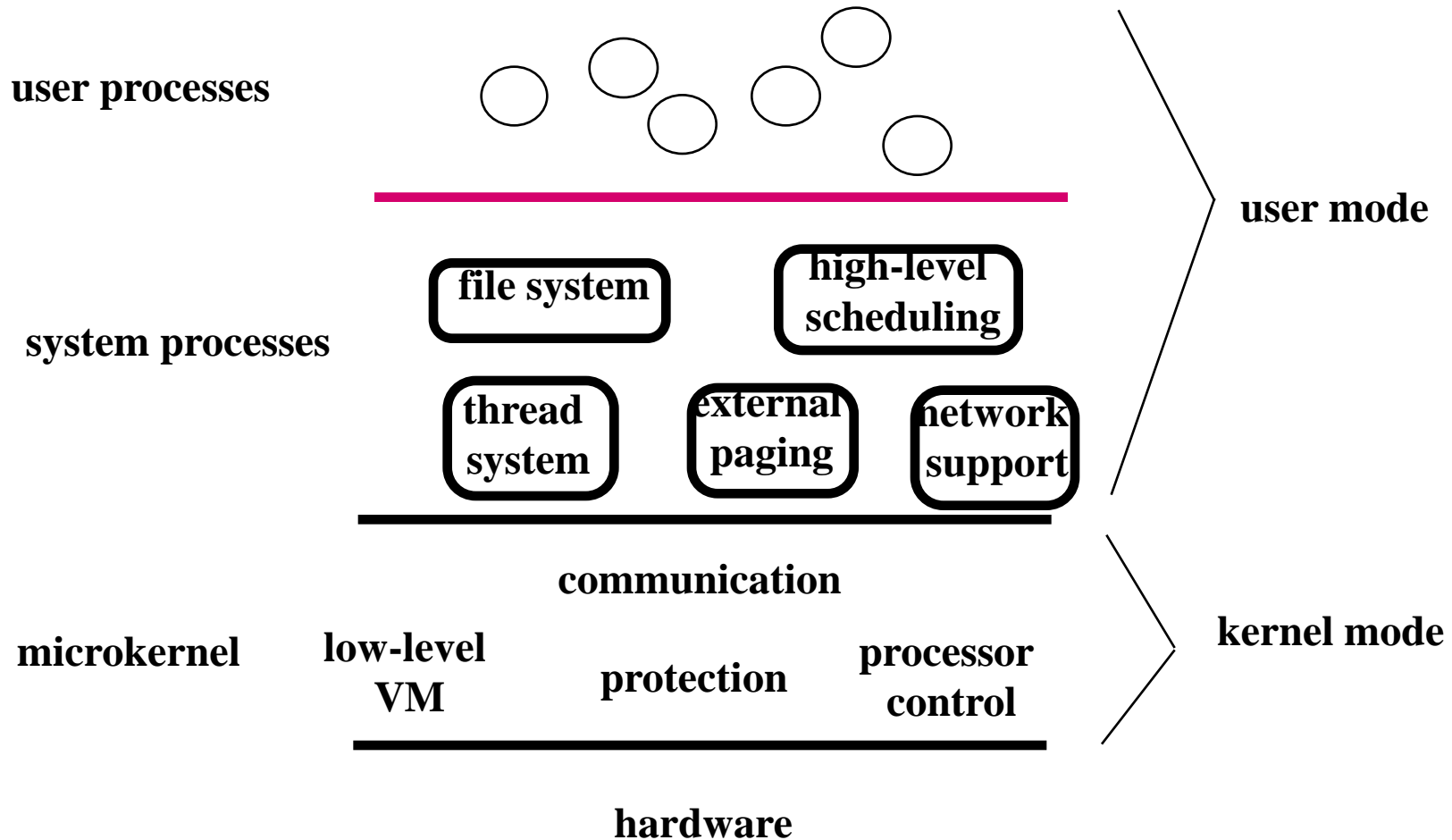
- An example of layering in modern operating systems
- Goal: separates hardware-specific routines from the “core” OS
 - Provides portability
 - Improves readability



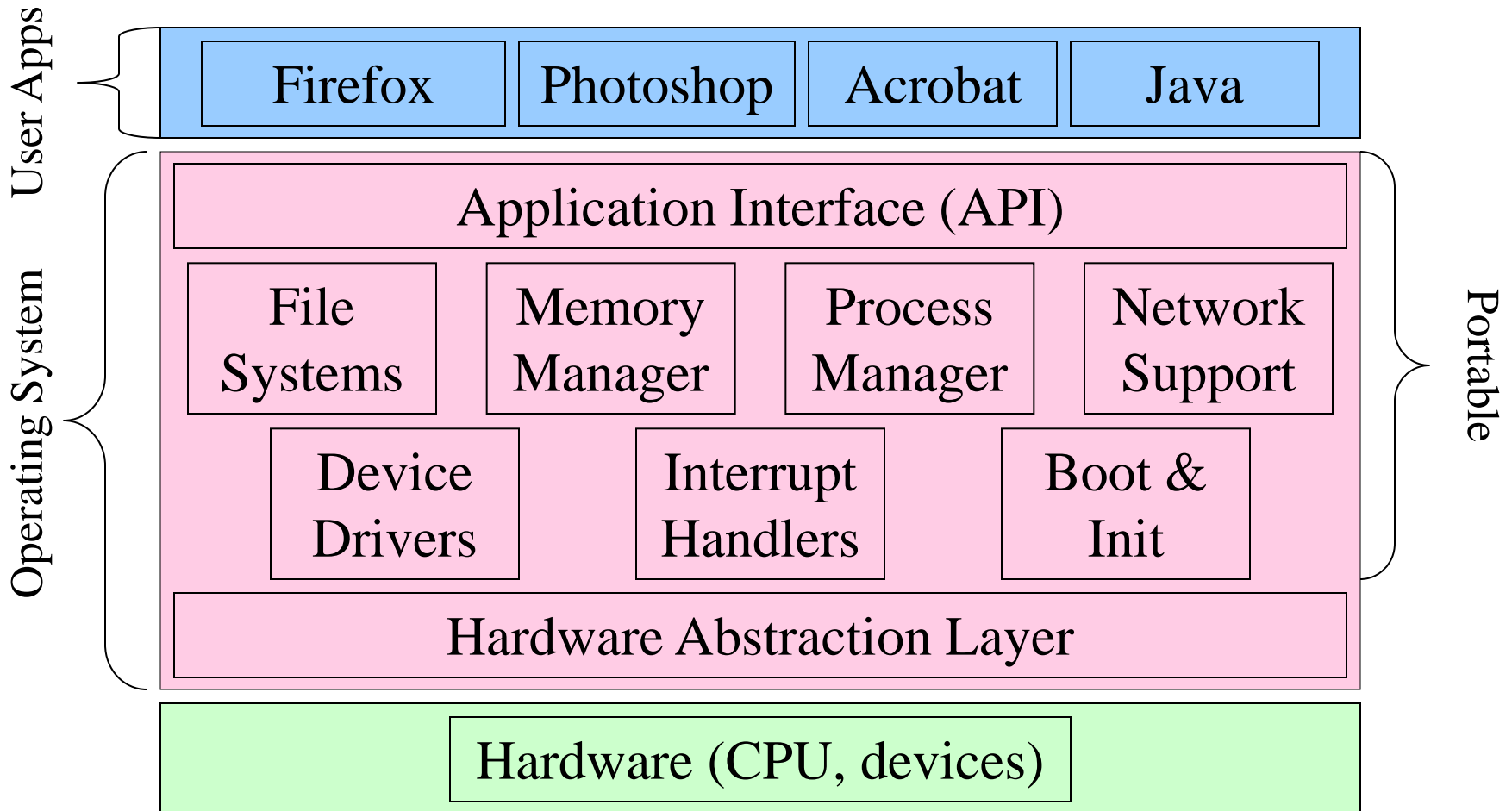
Microkernels

- Popular in the late 80's, early 90's
 - recent resurgence of popularity
- Goal:
 - minimize what goes in kernel
 - organize rest of OS as user-level processes
- This results in:
 - better reliability (isolation between components)
 - ease of extension and customization
 - **poor performance** (user/kernel boundary crossings)
- First microkernel system was Hydra (CMU, 1970)
 - Follow-ons: Mach (CMU), Chorus (French UNIX-like OS), OS X (Apple), in some opinions Windows NT (Microsoft)
- Windows NT (aka XP/Vista/Win7) designed as microkernel but executed as single kernel-mode image

Microkernel System Structure



The Sanitized Picture of OS Structure



Summary and Next Topic

- Summary
 - OS design has been an evolutionary process of trial and error. Probably more error than success
 - Successful OS's designs have run the spectrum from monolithic, to layered, to micro kernels, to virtual machines
 - The role and design of an OS is still evolving
 - It is impossible to pick one "correct" way to structure an OS
- Next Topic
 - Processes, one of the most fundamental pieces in an OS
 - What is a process, what does it do, and how does it do it