Concurrency
Motivation

• Operating systems (and application programs) often need to be able to handle multiple things happening at the same time
  – Process execution, interrupts, background tasks, system maintenance

• A single human is not very good at keeping track of multiple things happening simultaneously
  – A horde of people are

• **Threads** are an abstraction to help bridge this gap
Why Concurrency?

• Servers
  – Multiple connections handled simultaneously

• Parallel programs
  – To achieve better performance

• Programs with user interfaces
  – To achieve user responsiveness while doing computation

• Network and disk bound programs
  – To hide network/disk latency
Déjà vu?

• Didn’t we learn all about concurrency in CSE 332/333?
  – More practice
    • Realistic examples, especially in the project
  – Design patterns and pitfalls
    • Methodology for writing correct concurrent code
  – Implementation
    • How do threads work at the machine level?
  – CPU scheduling
    • If multiple threads to run, which do we do first?
Definitions

• A **thread** is a single execution sequence that represents a separately **schedulable** task
  – Single execution sequence: familiar programming model
  – Separately schedulable: OS can run or suspend a thread at any time

• Protection is an orthogonal concept
  – Can have one or many threads per protection domain
Threads in the Kernel and at User-Level

- Multi-threaded kernel
  - multiple threads, sharing kernel data structures, capable of using privileged instructions
- Multiprocess kernel
  - Multiple single-threaded processes
  - System calls access shared kernel data structures
- Multiple multi-threaded user processes
  - Each with multiple threads, sharing same data structures, isolated from other user processes
Thread Abstraction

• Infinite number of processors
• Threads execute with variable speed
  – Programs must be designed to work with any schedule
## Programmer vs. Processor View

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<tr>
<th>Programmer's View</th>
<th>Possible Execution #1</th>
<th>Possible Execution #2</th>
<th>Possible Execution #3</th>
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Possible Executions

**One Execution**
- Thread 1
- Thread 2
- Thread 3

**Another Execution**
- Thread 1
- Thread 2
- Thread 3

**Another Execution**
- Thread 1
- Thread 2
- Thread 3
Thread Operations

- **thread_create(thread, func, args)**
  - Create a new thread to run func(args)

- **thread_yield()**
  - Relinquish processor voluntarily

- **thread_join(thread)**
  - In parent, wait for forked thread to exit, then return

- **thread_exit**
  - Quit thread and clean up, wake up joiner if any
#define NTHREADS 10
thread_t threads[NTHREADS];
main() {
    for (i = 0; i < NTHREADS; i++) thread_create(&threads[i], &go, i);
    for (i = 0; i < NTHREADS; i++) {
        exitValue = thread_join(threads[i]);
        printf("Thread %d returned with %ld\n", i, exitValue);
    }
    printf("Main thread done.\n");
}
void go (int n) {
    printf("Hello from thread %d\n", n);
    thread_exit(100 + n);
    // REACHED?
threadHello: Example Output

- Why must “thread returned” print in order?
- What is maximum # of threads running when thread 5 prints hello?
- Minimum?
Fork/Join Concurrency

• Threads can create children, and wait for their completion
• Data only shared before fork/after join
• Examples:
  – Web server: fork a new thread for every new connection
    • As long as the threads are completely independent
  – Merge sort
  – Parallel memory copy
bzero with fork/join concurrency

```c
void blockzero (unsigned char *p, int length) {
    int i, j;
    thread_t threads[NTHREADS];
    struct bzeroparams params[NTHREADS];

    // For simplicity, assumes length is divisible by NTHREADS.
    for (i = 0, j = 0; i < NTHREADS; i++, j += length/NTHREADS) {
        params[i].buffer = p + i * length/NTHREADS;
        params[i].length = length/NTHREADS;
        thread_create_p(&(threads[i]), &go, &params[i]);
    }
    for (i = 0; i < NTHREADS; i++) {
        thread_join(threads[i]);
    }
}
```
Thread Data Structures

- **Thread Control Block (TCB)**
  - Stack Information
  - Saved Registers
  - Thread Metadata

- **Thread State**
  - **Shared State**
    - Code
    - Global Variables
    - Heap
  - **Thread 1’s Per-Thread State**
  - **Thread 2’s Per-Thread State**
Thread Lifecycle

- **Init**
  - Thread Creation: `stthread_create()`

- **Ready**
  - Scheduler Resumes Thread
  - Thread Yield/Scheduler Suspends Thread: `stthread_yield()`
  - Event Occurs: Other Thread Calls `stthread_join()`

- **Running**
  - Scheduler Resumes Thread
  - Thread Exit: `stthread_exit()`
  - Thread Waits for Event: `stthread_join()`

- **Waiting**
  - Event Occurs: Other Thread Calls `stthread_join()`

- **Finished**
Implementing Threads: Roadmap

• Kernel threads
  – Thread abstraction only available to kernel
  – To the kernel, a kernel thread and a single threaded user process look quite similar
• Multithreaded processes using kernel threads (Linux, MacOS)
  – Kernel thread operations available via syscall
• User-level threads
  – Thread operations without system calls
Multithreaded OS Kernel
Implementing threads

• Thread_fork(func, args)
  – Allocate thread control block
  – Allocate stack
  – Build stack frame for base of stack (stub)
  – Put func, args on stack
  – Put thread on ready list
  – Will run sometime later (maybe right away!)

• stub(func, args)
  – Call (*func)(args)
  – On return, call thread_exit()
Thread Stack

• What if a thread puts too many frames on its stack?
  – What happens in Java?
  – What happens in the Linux kernel?
  – What happens in xk?
  – What *should* happen?
Thread Context Switch

• Voluntary
  – thread_yield
  – thread_join (if child is not done yet)

• Involuntary
  – Interrupt or exception
  – Some other thread is higher priority
Voluntary thread context switch

- Save registers on old stack
- Switch to new stack, new thread
- Restore registers from new stack
- Return
- Exactly the same with kernel threads or user threads
OS/161 switchframe_switch

/* a0: old thread stack pointer
 * a1: new thread stack pointer */

/* Allocate stack space for 10 registers. */
addi sp, sp, -40

/* Save the registers */
sw ra, 36(sp)
sw gp, 32(sp)
sw s8, 28(sp)
sw s6, 24(sp)
sw s5, 20(sp)
sw s4, 16(sp)
sw s3, 12(sp)
sw s2, 8(sp)
sw s1, 4(sp)
sw s0, 0(sp)

/* Store old stack pointer in old thread */
sw sp, 0(a0)

/* Get new stack pointer from new thread */
lw sp, 0(a1)
nop /* delay slot for load */

/* Now, restore the registers */
lw s0, 0(sp)
lw s1, 4(sp)
lw s2, 8(sp)
lw s3, 12(sp)
lw s4, 16(sp)
lw s5, 20(sp)
lw s6, 24(sp)
lw s8, 28(sp)
lw gp, 32(sp)
lw ra, 36(sp)
nop /* delay slot for load */

/* and return. */
ja
addi sp, sp, 40 /* in delay slot */
# Save caller’s register state
# NOTE: %eax, etc. are ephemeral
pushl %ebx
pushl %ebp
pushl %esi
pushl %edi

# Get offsetof (struct thread, stack)
mov thread_stack_stack_ofs, %edx
# Save current stack pointer to old thread's stack, if any.
movl SWITCH_CUR(%esp), %eax
movl %esp, (%eax,%edx,1)

# Change stack pointer to new thread's stack
# this also changes currentThread
movl SWITCH_NEXT(%esp), %ecx
movl (%ecx,%edx,1), %esp

# Restore caller's register state.
popl %edi
pobl %esi
pobl %ebp
pobl %ebx
ret
A Subtlety

• Thread_create puts new thread on ready list
• When it first runs, some thread calls switchframe
  – Saves old thread state to stack
  – Restores new thread state from stack
• Set up new thread’s stack as if it had saved its state in switchframe
  – “returns” to stub at base of stack to run func
Two Threads Call Yield

Thread 1’s instructions
“return” from thread_switch into stub
call go
call thread_yield
choose another thread
call thread_switch
save thread 1 state to TCB
load thread 2 state

return from thread_switch
return from thread_yield
call thread_yield
choose another thread
call thread_switch

Thread 2’s instructions
“return” from thread_switch into stub
call go
call thread_yield
choose another thread
call thread_switch
save thread 1 state to TCB
load thread 2 state

“return” from thread_switch into stub
call go
call thread_yield
choose another thread
call thread_switch
save thread 2 state to TCB
load thread 2 state

return from thread_switch
return from thread_yield
call thread_yield
choose another thread
call thread_switch

Processor’s instructions
“return” from thread_switch into stub
call go
call thread_yield
choose another thread
call thread_switch
save thread 1 state to TCB
load thread 2 state

“return” from thread_switch into stub
call go
call thread_yield
choose another thread
call thread_switch
save thread 2 state to TCB
load thread 2 state

return from thread_switch
return from thread_yield
call thread_yield
choose another thread
call thread_switch
Faster Thread/Process Switch

• What happens on a timer (or other) interrupt?
  – Interrupt handler saves state of interrupted thread
  – Decides to run a new thread
  – Throw away current state of interrupt handler!
  – Instead, set saved stack pointer to trapframe
  – Restore state of new thread
  – On resume, pops trapframe to restore interrupted thread
Multithreaded User Processes (Take 1)

- User thread = kernel thread (Linux, MacOS)
  - System calls for thread fork, join, exit (and lock, unlock,...)
  - Kernel does context switch
  - Simple, but a lot of transitions between user and kernel mode
Multithreaded User Processes (Take 1)
• Green threads (early Java)
  – User-level library, within a single-threaded process
  – Library does thread context switch
  – Preemption via upcall/UNIX signal on timer interrupt
  – Use multiple processes for parallelism
    • Shared memory region mapped into each process
Multithreaded User Processes (Take 3)

• Scheduler activations (Windows 8)
  – Kernel allocates processors to user-level library
  – Thread library implements context switch
  – Thread library decides what thread to run next

• Upcall whenever kernel needs a user-level scheduling decision
  • Process assigned a new processor
  • Processor removed from process
  • System call blocks in kernel
Question

• Compare event-driven programming with multithreaded concurrency. Which is better in which circumstances, and why?