Threads (CSE 422S)

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A Modern Process (1)

- Separate idea of execution from resource grouping
- Thread
  - A unit of local dispatching (scheduling) and has priority
  - Has an execution path (is a thread of control)
  - Has a computation state (stack, set of CPU registers)
- Global variables are shared by all threads
- System state shared by threads
  - File descriptors, working directory, etc.

A Modern Process (2)

Single-Threaded Process Model

Multithreaded Process Model

A Modern Process (3)

Stack
Global Vars.
Instructions

SP1
SP2
SP3

Thread Library
Lightweight Processes

User Space
Kernel Space

Kernel Threads
Kernel Stack, Memory Map, File Descriptors, etc.
Database Server Example

Benefits
» Simplifies sharing of memory and file descriptors
» Concurrent execution of relatively independent tasks
» Increase overall throughput for some problems

Thread Execution (1 Processor)

Single-Threaded Processes
- Process A
- Process B
- Unix Kernel

Multithreaded Processes
» Can overlap own I/O with own CPU usage
- Process A
  - Thread 0
  - Thread 1
- Process B
  - Thread 0
  - Unix Kernel

Thread Library Implementations

User-Space
» Self-contained user-level library
» All code and structures are in user-space
» Depends on a small number of OS system calls
» N:1 model
  * N user threads mapped to 1 kernel thread or process

Kernel-Space
» Thin user-space layer
» Substantial amount of kernel code and structures
» 1:1 model and N:M model
  * 1 user thread mapped to 1 kernel thread
  * or N user threads mapped to M kernel threads

N:1 and 1:1 Model of Multithreading
**N:1 Model of Multithreading (1)**

- Many threads mapped onto ONE process
- **Implementation**
  - Put thread package entirely in user space
    - Thread creation-scheduling-synchronization done in user space
    - Allocate stack for each thread
    - Kernel has no knowledge of threads
  - **Thread Table**
    - Analogous to process table, but contains only thread state
  - **Dispatcher**
    - An ordinary function called during startup; calls main()
    - Use setjmp(3)/longjmp(3) in place of function call/return

**Implementation (cont)**

- **Non-Blocking I/O Wrapper**
  ```
  while (iorequest(...) is incomplete) {
    Update thread table (I/O wait; thread state);
    Jump to dispatcher;
    // Return here when dispatcher returns control
  }
  ```

**Advantages**

- Coroutine style control flow
- Fast, but no speed-up on a multiprocessor
  - One process and threads are unknown to OS kernel
  - Scheduling done by user-thread package (within context of process)

**Disadvantages**

- Non-preemptive scheduling within a process

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**1:1 Model of Multithreading**

- **Features**
  - Many threads can run simultaneously on different CPUs
  - Allows 1 or more threads to issue blocking system calls while others run (even on a uniprocessor)
  - Thread creation requires LWP creation (a sys call)
  - Each LWP takes up kernel resources ➔ Limited total number of threads

**Lightweight Processes (LWPs)**

- **Kernel Thread**
  - Created/Destroyed by OS kernel
  - Has own kernel stack but shares text and globals
  - Used for kernel operations (e.g., I/O, paging)

- **Lightweight Process (LWP)**
  - User thread with kernel support
    - Each LWP is associated with a unique kernel thread
  - Shares addr space with other LWPs of same process
  - Maintains some of user state (register context, ...), kernel stack, and kernel register context
  - Scheduled by kernel
  - Most LWP operations (create/destroy, synchronize) require system call ➔ High overhead
N:M Model of Multithreading

- **Strict N:M (N ≥ M)**
  - Thread creation, scheduling, and some synchronization done in user space

- **N:M + 1:1**
  - Combines the best of N:M and 1:1
  - Used in Solaris, IRIX, HP-UX
  - Win32 fibers is a rough approximation

Resources Used

- **Kernel Thread**
  - Copy of kernel registers
  - Priority and scheduling into
  - Ptrs to scheduler queue or resource wait queues for each thread
  - Ptrs to LWP and proc structure (if any)
  - Ptrs to list of all threads in a process and all threads in system
  - LWP info

- **LWP**
  - Copy of user-level registers
  - System call args, results, error code
  - Signal handling info
  - Resource usage and profiling info
  - Virtual time alarms
  - Ptr to kernel thread
  - Ptr to proc structure

Threads Standards

- Defines API and behavior of threads paradigm
  - About 50 function calls

- **POSIX Threads**
  - IEEE 1003.1c (Pthreads)
  - Portable (Implementations on almost all Unix Systems)
  - Not adopted by Microsoft

- **Win32 and OS/2 Threads**
  - Not compatible with Pthreads
  - Proprietary (vendor-specific)

- **Solaris Threads (UI Threads)**
  - Used in Solaris 2 and developed before Pthreads standard was finalized
  - Virtually the same as Pthreads

POSIX Synchronization Primitives

- Each synchronization facility has a named data structure called a synchronization variable

- **Counting Semaphores**
  - Typically used to coordinate access to shared variable

- **Mutual Exclusion (mutex) Locks**
  - Used to serialize the execution of code

- **Condition Variables**
  - Enables threads to atomically block until a condition is satisfied

- **Multiple Readers, Single Writer Locks**
  - Allows many threads to have simultaneous read-only access to data while allowing only one thread to have write access at any given time
Examples of pthreads Functions (1)

- **Thread Creation/Termination**
  - `int pthread_create(pthread_t * T, pthread_attr_t *Attr, void *(*start(void *), void *arg);`
  - `void pthread_exit(void * ret);`
  - `int pthread_join(pthread_t T, void **ret);`

- **Mutex Lock**
  - `int pthread_mutex_lock(pthread_mutex_t *M)`
  - `int pthread_mutex_trylock(pthread_mutex_t *M)`
  - `int pthread_mutex_unlock(pthread_mutex_t *M)`
  - `int pthread_mutex_init(pthread_mutex_t *M, const pthread_mutexattr_t *Attr)`

Examples of pthreads Functions (2)

- **Condition Variable**
  - `int pthread_cond_wait(pthread_cond_t *Cv, pthread_mutex_t *M)`
  - `int pthread_cond_signal(pthread_cond_t *Cv)`
  - `int pthread_cond_init(pthread_cond_t *Cv, const pthread_condattr_t *Attr)`

- **Semaphores**
  - `int sem_wait(sem_t *S);`
  - `int sem_post(sem_t *S);`
  - `int sem_init(sem_t *S, int isShared, unsigned int V);`

Mutex Lock Implementation

```c
pthread_mutex_lock(L) {
  while (TestAndSet(L)) { // someone has lock
    Put thread on wait queue for L;
    Suspend thread;
  }
  return;
}

pthread_mutex_unlock(L) {
  Unsuspend next thread in wait queue for L;
  L = 0;
  return;
}
```

- **Mutexes**
  - Simple enough to implement entirely in user space

- **Variation**
  - Spin for a short time instead of suspending in hopes of short blocking time

Spin Locks

- **Blocking on a mutex lock will cause two context switches (switch out, switch in)**
  - 150 usec on SC2000/Solaris 2.4
  - 25 usec on 300 MHz Pentium II/NetBSD
  - 35 usec on 167 MHz SPARC 5/Solaris 2.5

- **A spin lock can be used to avoid the context switching, but wastes CPU time**

```c
while (pthread_mutex_trylock(&mylock) == EBUSY) {
  // ... Do Nothing ... ;
  ... Critical Section ...
}
pthread_mutex_unlock(&mylock);
```
Advantage Over Semaphore

- Uses little memory and is fast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Synchronization</th>
<th>Time (usec) on 20-Proc. 40 MHz SPARC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unbound Semaphore</td>
<td>292.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bound Semaphore</td>
<td>326.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbound Mutex</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bound Mutex</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Full context switch

Condition Variables (1)

- Use
  - Wait until a condition is satisfied without busy waiting
  - NOT used for mutual exclusion, but ...
  - Must be used in conjunction with a mutex lock

- Primitives
  - `int pthread_cond_wait(pthread_cond_t *Cv, pthread_mutex_t *M)`
    - Block until condition is signaled
    - Atomically release mutex lock before blocking and atomically reacquire it before returning
  - `int pthread_cond_signal(pthread_cond_t *Cv)`
    - Unblock one thread waiting for the condition
    - No thread blocked on Cv ➔ No Effect
    - Call under protection of mutex associated with Cv
    - Retest condition after thread becomes unblocked

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Condition Variable Example

- Wait for W threads to finish

```c
#include <pthread.h>

pthread_mutex_t doneLock;
pthread_cond_t doneCv;

// Main thread:
pthread_mutex_lock(&doneLock);
if (nDone < W) pthread_cond_wait(&doneCv, &doneLock);
pthread_mutex_unlock(&doneLock);

// Other threads
pthread_mutex_lock(&doneLock);
nDone++;
if (nDone == 0) pthread_cond_signal(&doneCv);
pthread_mutex_unlock(&doneLock);
```

CVs are Stateless Signals (1)

- Abbreviations
  - `Csig` pthread_cond_signal
  - `Cwait` pthread_cond_wait
  - `Lock` pthread_mutex_lock
  - `Unlock` pthread_mutex_unlock
  - `Set(x)` Lock(L); cond = x; Unlock(L);

Case A (OK)

```c
[Thread 1] [Thread 2]
Lock(L); Cwait(X, L);
Csig(X);
Unlock(L);
```
CVs are Stateless Signals (2)

- Case B (Lost Signal Problem)

  ```
  [Thread 1] Csig(X);   [Thread 2]
  Lock(L);            
  Cwait(X, L);        
  Unlock(L);
  ```

- Case B’ (Solve Lost Signal Problem)

  ```
  [Thread 1] Csig(X);   [Thread 2]
  Lock(L);            
  cond = 1;           
  Cwait(L);           
  Unlock(L);
  ```

  ```
  while (!cond) Cwait(X, L);
  Unlock(L);
  ```

CVs are Stateless Signals (3)

- Case B’’ (Alternative Solution)

  ```
  [Thread 1] Csig(X);   [Thread 2]
  Set(1);             
  Cwait(L);           
  Unlock(L);
  ```

  ```
  Lock(L);
  while (!cond) Cwait(X, L);
  Unlock(L);
  ```

Thread Scheduling

- Local Scheduling (Process Contention Scope)
  - Scheduling done by the threads library
  - Very fast except for preemption (requires system call)
  - Scheduling of LWP is global, but is independent of local scheduling
  - Scheduling is by thread priority
    - Set by programmer; not adjusted by threads library

- Global Scheduling (System Contention Scope)
  - Scheduling done by OS kernal
  - Thread blocks → LWP goes to sleep