Chapter 4: Threads
Chapter 4: Threads

- Overview
- Multithreading Models
- Thread Libraries
- Threading Issues
- Operating System Examples
- Windows XP Threads
- Linux Threads
Objectives

- To introduce the notion of a thread — a fundamental unit of CPU utilization that forms the basis of multithreaded computer systems
- To discuss the APIs for the Pthreads, Win32, and Java thread libraries
- To examine issues related to multithreaded programming
Motivation

- Threads run within application
- Multiple tasks with the application can be implemented by separate threads
  - Update display
  - Fetch data
  - Spell checking
  - Answer a network request
- Process creation is heavy-weight while thread creation is light-weight
- Can simplify code, increase efficiency
- Kernels are generally multithreaded
Single and Multithreaded Processes

Single-threaded process

Multithreaded process
Benefits

- Responsiveness
- Resource Sharing
- Economy
- Scalability
Multicore Programming

- Multicore systems putting pressure on programmers, challenges include:
  - Dividing activities
  - Balance
  - Data splitting
  - Data dependency
  - Testing and debugging
Multithreaded Server Architecture

1. Request

2. Create new thread to service the request

3. Resume listening for additional client requests
Concurrent Execution on a Single-core System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T₁</th>
<th>T₂</th>
<th>T₃</th>
<th>T₄</th>
<th>T₁</th>
<th>T₂</th>
<th>T₃</th>
<th>T₄</th>
<th>T₁</th>
<th>...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**single core**

**time**
Parallel Execution on a Multicore System

core 1

\[ T_1 \quad T_3 \quad T_1 \quad T_3 \quad T_1 \quad \ldots \]

core 2

\[ T_2 \quad T_4 \quad T_2 \quad T_4 \quad T_2 \quad \ldots \]

time
User Threads

- Thread management done by user-level threads library

- Three primary thread libraries:
  - POSIX Pthreads
  - Win32 threads
  - Java threads
Kernel Threads

- Supported by the Kernel

- Examples
  - Windows XP/2000
  - Solaris
  - Linux
  - Tru64 UNIX
  - Mac OS X
Multithreading Models

- Many-to-One
- One-to-One
- Many-to-Many
Many-to-One

- Many user-level threads mapped to single kernel thread

- Examples:
  - Solaris Green Threads
  - GNU Portable Threads
One-to-One

- Each user-level thread maps to kernel thread

- Examples
  - Windows NT/XP/2000
  - Linux
  - Solaris 9 and later
One-to-one Model
Many-to-Many Model

- Allows many user level threads to be mapped to many kernel threads
- Allows the operating system to create a sufficient number of kernel threads
- Solaris prior to version 9
- Windows NT/2000 with the *ThreadFiber* package
Two-level Model

- Similar to M:M, except that it allows a user thread to be **bound** to kernel thread

- Examples
  - IRIX
  - HP-UX
  - Tru64 UNIX
  - Solaris 8 and earlier
Two-level Model
Thread Libraries

- **Thread library** provides programmer with API for creating and managing threads

- Two primary ways of implementing
  - Library entirely in user space
  - Kernel-level library supported by the OS
Pthreads

- May be provided either as user-level or kernel-level
- A POSIX standard (IEEE 1003.1c) API for thread creation and synchronization
- API specifies behavior of the thread library, implementation is up to development of the library
- Common in UNIX operating systems (Solaris, Linux, Mac OS X)
Pthreads Example

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

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

int main(int argc, char *argv[]) {
    pthread_t tid; /* the thread identifier */
    pthread_attr_t attr; /* set of thread attributes */

    if (argc != 2) {
        fprintf(stderr, "usage: a.out <integer value>\n");
        return -1;
    }
    if (atoi(argv[1]) < 0) {
        fprintf(stderr, "%d must be >= 0\n", atoi(argv[1]));
        return -1;
    }
```
/* get the default attributes */
pthread_attr_init(&attr);
/* create the thread */
pthread_create(&tid,&attr,runner,argv[1]);
/* wait for the thread to exit */
pthread_join(tid,NULL);

printf("sum = %d\n",sum);
}

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

    for (i = 1; i <= upper; i++)
        sum += i;

    pthread_exit(0);
}

Figure 4.9  Multithreaded C program using the Pthreads API.
#include <windows.h>
#include <stdio.h>
DWORD Sum; /* data is shared by the thread(s) */
/* the thread runs in this separate function */

DWORD WINAPI Summation(LPVOID Param)
{
    DWORD Upper = *(DWORD*)Param;
    for (DWORD i = 0; i <= Upper; i++)
    {
        Sum += i;
    }
    return 0;
}

int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    DWORD ThreadId;
    HANDLE ThreadHandle;
    int Param;
    /* perform some basic error checking */
    if (argc != 2) {
        fprintf(stderr,"An integer parameter is required\n");
        return -1;
    }
    Param = atoi(argv[1]);
    if (Param < 0) {
        fprintf(stderr,"An integer >= 0 is required\n");
        return -1;
    }
// create the thread
ThreadHandle = CreateThread(
    NULL, // default security attributes
    0, // default stack size
    Summation, // thread function
    &Param, // parameter to thread function
    0, // default creation flags
    &Threadld); // returns the thread identifier

if (ThreadHandle != NULL) {
    // now wait for the thread to finish
    WaitForSingleObject(ThreadHandle, INFINITE);

    // close the thread handle
    CloseHandle(ThreadHandle);

    printf("sum = %d\n", Sum);
}

Figure 4.10 Multithreaded C program using the Win32 API.
Java Threads

- Java threads are managed by the JVM

- Typically implemented using the threads model provided by underlying OS

- Java threads may be created by:
  - Extending Thread class
  - Implementing the Runnable interface
Java Multithreaded Program

class Sum
{
    private int sum;

    public int getSum()
    {
        return sum;
    }

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

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.setSum(sum);
    }
}
public class Driver
{
    public static void main(String[] args)
    {
        if (args.length > 0)
        {
            if (Integer.parseInt(args[0]) < 0)
                System.err.println(args[0] + " must be >= 0.");
            else
                // create the object to be shared
                Sum sumObject = new Sum();
                int upper = Integer.parseInt(args[0]);
                Thread thrd = new Thread(new Summation(upper, sumObject));
                thrd.start();
                try {
                    thrd.join();
                    System.out.println("The sum of " + upper + " is " + sumObject.getSum());
                } catch (InterruptedException ie) {} } } else
        System.err.println("Usage: Summation <integer value>"); }

Figure 4.11 Java program for the summation of a non-negative integer.
Threading Issues

- Semantics of `fork()` and `exec()` system calls
- Thread cancellation of target thread
  - Asynchronous or deferred
- Signal handling
  - Synchronous and asynchronous
Thread pools

Thread-specific data
- Create Facility needed for data private to thread

Scheduler activations
Semantics of fork() and exec()

- Does `fork()` duplicate only the calling thread or all threads?
Thread Cancellation

- Terminating a thread before it has finished

- Two general approaches:
  - **Asynchronous cancellation** terminates the target thread immediately.
  - **Deferred cancellation** allows the target thread to periodically check if it should be cancelled.
Signal Handling

- Signals are used in UNIX systems to notify a process that a particular event has occurred.

- A **signal handler** is used to process signals
  1. Signal is generated by particular event
  2. Signal is delivered to a process
  3. Signal is handled

- Options:
  - Deliver the signal to the thread to which the signal applies
  - Deliver the signal to every thread in the process
  - Deliver the signal to certain threads in the process
  - Assign a specific thread to receive all signals for the process
Thread Pools

- Create a number of threads in a pool where they await work

- Advantages:
  - Usually slightly faster to service a request with an existing thread than create a new thread
  - Allows the number of threads in the application(s) to be bound to the size of the pool
Thread Specific Data

- Allows each thread to have its own copy of data
- Useful when you do not have control over the thread creation process (i.e., when using a thread pool)
Scheduler Activations

- Both M:M and Two-level models require communication to maintain the appropriate number of kernel threads allocated to the application.

- Scheduler activations provide **upcalls** - a communication mechanism from the kernel to the thread library.

- This communication allows an application to maintain the correct number kernel threads.
Lightweight Processes

user thread

lightweight process

kernel thread
Operating System Examples

- Windows XP Threads
- Linux Thread
Windows XP Threads

- Implements the one-to-one mapping, kernel-level

- Each thread contains
  - A thread id
  - Register set
  - Separate user and kernel stacks
  - Private data storage area

- The register set, stacks, and private storage area are known as the context of the threads

- The primary data structures of a thread include:
  - ETHREAD (executive thread block)
  - KTHREAD (kernel thread block)
  - TEB (thread environment block)
Linux Threads

- Linux refers to them as *tasks* rather than *threads*

- Thread creation is done through `clone()` system call

- `clone()` allows a child task to share the address space of the parent task (process)

- `struct task_struct` points to process data structures (shared or unique)
Linux Threads

- `fork()` and `clone()` system calls
- Doesn’t distinguish between process and thread
  - Uses term `task` rather than thread
- `clone()` takes options to determine sharing on process create
- `struct task_struct` points to process data structures (shared or unique)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>flag</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLONE_FS</td>
<td>File-system information is shared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLONE_VM</td>
<td>The same memory space is shared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLONE_SIGHAND</td>
<td>Signal handlers are shared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLONE_FILES</td>
<td>The set of open files is shared.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
End of Chapter 4